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THE
CHRISTIAN'S
GREAT INTEREST,

Divided into Two Parts.

The first whereof containeth, The trial
of a saving Interest in Christ.

The second pointeth forth plainly, The
Way how to Attain it.

By Mr. WILLIAM GUTHERY Minister of
the Gospel at Finwick.

II. Pet. i. 10. Wherefore the rather, Bre-
thren, give diligence to make your calling
and election sure.

II Cor. xiii. 5. Examine yourselves whether
ye be in the faith, prove your own selves :
know ye not your own selves, how that
Jesus Christ is in you, excep. ye be Repro-
bates ?

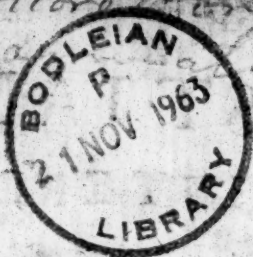
Cant. vi. 3. I am my Beloved's and my
Beloved is mine.

G L A S G O W,

Printed by John Robertson and Mrs M^e Lean
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Myriod. Burroughs 1832



An epistle commendatory from a christian friend
giving an account of his thoughts upo nerusal
of this book.

Christian friend,

I Have sent you by the bearer this book, which
by providence came to my hand, and a bleſſed
providence indeed it was tome ; for, I hope the
ſame mercy that brought it to my hand, hath
brought the Saviour of it to my heart

Upon perusal of it, I find ſuch a bleſſed and hap-
py connection, betwixt the giſts and the graces
of the Spirit, ſuch an holy and humble condeſcen-
ſion to my plain capacity, ſuch a ſerious handling
of ſerious truths, that the language of my heart,
upon perusal of it, was ſomewhat like that of the
woman of Canaan. John iv. 29. Come, ſee a man,
which told me all things that ever I did : or rather
all that God hath done in me, and for me. He that
hath waded much in the water of ſoul trouble, may
here behold a lively deſcription of the ſpirit of
bondage in all its terrors and troubles, ; And he
who is got out of theſe, and is ſunning his ſoul in
the light of God's countenance, may here behold
the light ſide of the cloud ; I mean the Spirit
of adoption, in all its beautiful colours.

The firſt part of this book ſets forth the ſoul
in a ſtorm, when the law comes thundering to
the conſcience ; the laſt leads it into a calm of
ſweet peace and ſerenity. When the Spirit of God
comes to a troubled ſoul, as the Son of God once
came to the troubled ſea, with a Peace, be ſtill,
Matth. xiv. 29. But if it ſhould not be thus, the
believer is here directed to be willing to want what
God is not willing to give ; and to know he is wiſe
to give when he will, what he will, and how he
will. I find now, that peace is ſown for the righ-
teous, Pſal. xcvi. 11. But all do not reap the crop

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till they come into Immanuel's land Isa. viii. 8.
There our Joy, as well as our light, shall be clear,
and our Love perfect.

And if there be any more concerned in this
Piece than others, (tho' it deals forth its bread to
all) 'its young men and young converts; the letter
may here behold, as in a map or mirror, the several
providences, and various working of the blessed
Spirit, that have all concurred in the bringing them
home to God; and may take notice of all the inducements
and remoras they met with in the way, that as Moses
was to write a history of the Children of Israel passing
through the Wilderness: Numb. xxxiii. 2. So doth this Book,
with a holy Kind of Elegancy, describe the Spirit's leading the
Soul out of its bewildered Estate, into the spiritual Canaan,
never leaving it, till it comes to the mountain of spices,
Song. viii. 14. out of Satan's Gun shot, where his habitation
shall be a Munition of Rocks, Isa. xxxvi. 16. Neither is there
one path omitted, so far as I could ever read, or gather from
my own or others experience; so that it may not be unfitly
termed, A spiritual day book of all the passages between
the Spirit of God, and the soul in its Regeneration work;
which is no less profitable than delightful for the believer,
to be reading over the records of God's love manifested in
the Gospel; what care and cost he took with him, to recover
him out of the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity;
for trial brings Truth to light, and those Things, which
through many clouds intercepting, may have lost there
Remembrance in the Soul, are here clearly discovered,
that they have been: altho', for the present, the believer
cries out, How is the Gold become dim? How is the fine
Gold changed? And the looking over past experience,
brings a renewed Savour, and a spiritual Relish of those
things upon the heart to them, who have thus tasted that
the Lord is good, at least supports the Soul under the
Want

To the Reader.

v

want of sensible feeling, whilst it calls to Remembrance the days of old, the Years of God's right hand. But I have done, and yet me thinks I can never write enough of the excellency and utility of this piece; the Lord make it so profitable to others, as it hath been to me. To his blessing I leave both you and it, and remains,

Your true Christian Friend,

G. B.

T O T H E
R E A D E R.

Christian Reader.

WHILE the generality of men, especially in these days, by their eager pursuit after low and base interests, have proclaimed, as upon the house tops, how much they have forgotten to make choice of that better part, which (if chosen) should never be taken from them: I have made an essay, such as it is, in the following treatise, to take thee off from this unprofitable, though painful pursuit, by proposing the chiefest of interests, even the christian's great interest, to be seriously pondered, and constantly pursued by thee: Thou may'st think it strange, to see any thing in print from my pen, (as indeed it is a surprise to my self) but necessity hath made me,

for this one, to offer so much violence to my own inclination, in regard that some, without my knowledge, have lately published some imperfect notes of a few of my sermons, most confusedly cast together, prefixing withal this vain title, (as displeasing to my self, as the publishing of the thing) A clear attractive warming beam, &c. Upon this occasion I was prevailed with to publish this little piece, wherein I have purposely used a most homely and plain stile, least otherwise (tho' when I have stretched my self to the outmost, I am below the judicious and more understanding) I should be above the reach of the rude and ignorant, whose advantage I have mainly, if not only consulted, I have likewise studied brevity in every thing, so far as I conceived it to be consistent with plainness and perspicuity, knowing that the persons to whom I address my self herein, have neither much money to spend upon books, nor much time to spare upon reading. If thou be a rigid critick, I know thou mayst meet with several things to card at; yet assure they self, that I had no design to offend thee, neither will thy simple approbation satisfy me; 'tis thy edification I intend, together with the incitements of some others, more expert and experienced in this excellent subject, to handle the same at greater length, which I have more briefly hinted at, who am,

Thy Servant in the

Work of the gospel;

W. GUTHERY.

T H E

John 3. 5.
 Prov. 3. 25, 26.
 Ps. 37. 4.
 Hag. 2. 7.
 Mat. 21. 28.
 Mat. 3. 17.
 Eccl. 6. 6.
 Jer. 3. 23.

Mat. 12. 8.
 Prov. 11. 30.
 Ps. 89.

(1)

THE

CHRISTIAN'S

GREAT INTEREST.

The INTRODUCTION.

SINCE there be so many people living under the ordinances, pretending, without ground, to a special interest in Christ, and to his favour and salvation, as is clear, Matth. vii. 22. 23. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work iniquity. Matth. xxv. 11. 12, Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered, and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Luke 13. 23. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." And since many, who have good ground of claim to Christ, are not established in the confidence of his favour, but remain in the dark, without comfort, hesitating concerning the reality of godliness in themselves, and speaking little to the commendation of religion to others, especially in the time of their straits. I shall speak a little to two things of greatest concernment. The one is, How a person shall know if he hath a true and special

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special interest in Christ, and whether he doth lay
just claim to God's favour and salvation? The
other is, In case a person fall short in the fore-
said trial, what course he shall take for making
sure God's friendship and salvation to himself

P A R T. I.

The Trial of a Saving Interest in C H R I S T,

How shall a Man know if he hath a true and
special Interest in Christ, and whether he hath,
or may lay Claim justly to God's favour and
salvation?

C H A P. I.

A Man's interest in Christ may be known: It is
a matter of the highest importance, and is to be
determined by scripture.

BEFORE we speak directly to the question,
we shall premise some things to make way
for the answer;

First, That a man's interest in Christ, or his
gracious state may be known, and that with
more certainty than people do conjecture; yea,
and the knowledge of it may be more easily at-
tained unto, than many do imagine: For, not
only hath the Lord commanded men to know
their interest in him, as a thing attainable.
2 Cor. 13. 5. Examine yourselves, whether ye be
in the faith, &c. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Give diligence
to make your calling and election sure, &c. but
many of the saints have attained unto the clear
persuasion of their interest in Christ, and in
God

God as their own God; how often do they call him their God and their portion, and how persuaded is Paul, That nothing can separate him from the love of God? Rom. 8. 38. 39. Therefore the knowledge of a man's gracious state is attainable.

And the knowledge of it, which may be attained, is no fancy and bare conceit, but it is most sure; Doubtless thou art our Father, saith the Prophet, in the name of the church, Isa. 63. 16. It is clear thus. I. That can be no fancy, but a very sure knowledge, which doth yield to a rational man comfort in most real straits; But to doth this, 1 Sam. 30. 16. When the people spake of stoning David, he encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Psal. 3. 6. he saith there, He will not be afraid of ten thousands that rise against him. Compare these words with ver. 3. of that Psalm, But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head. Psal. 27. 1. 3: The Lord is my light, and my salvation whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. II. That is a sure knowledge of a thing, which maketh a wise merchant sell all he hath, that he may keep it sure; that maketh a man forego Children, Lands, Life, and suffer the spoiling of all joyfully; But so doth this, Matth 13. 44. Mark 10. 28. 29. Heb. 10. 34. Rom. 5. 3. Acts 5. 41. III. That must be a sure and certain Knowledge, and no Fancy, whereupon a man voluntarily and freely doth adventure his soul, when he is stepping into Eternity with this Word in his Mouth, This is all my desire: But such a Knowledge is this, 2 Sam. 22. 5.

And again, not only may a godly Man come to the sure knowledge of his gracious state, but

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it is more easily attainable than many do apprehend: For, supposing what shall be afterwards proved, That a man may know the gracious work of God's spirit in himself; If he will but argue rationally from thence, he shall be forced to conclude his interest in Christ, unless he deny clear scripture truths. I shall only make use of one here, because we are to speak more directly to this afterwards. A godly man may argue thus, Whosoever receive Christ, are justly reputed the children of God, John 1. 12. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God: But I have received Christ all the ways which the word there can import; for I please the device of salvation by Christ, I agree to the terms, I welcome the offer of Christ in all his offices, as a King to rule over me, a priest to offer and interceed for me, a prophet to teach me: I lay out my heart for him and towards him, resting on him as I am able: What else can be meant by the word receiving? Therefore may I say, and conclude plainly and warrantably, I am justly to reckon my self God's child, according to the foresaid scripture, which cannot fail.

The Second thing to be premised, is, That a man be savingly in covenant with God, is a matter of highest importance, It is his life, Deut. 32. 47. And yet very few have, or seek after a saving interest in the covenant, and many foolishly think they have such a thing, without any solid ground, Matth. 7, 14. Few find or walk in the narrow way. This should alarm people to be serious about the matter, since it is of so great consequence to be in Christ; and since there be but few that may lay just claim to him: And yet many do foolishly fancy an interest in him, who are deceived by a false confidence, as the foolish virgins do, Matth. 25.

The

Interest in Christ.

The Third thing to be premised, is, Men must resolve to be determined by scripture, in this matter of their interest in Christ. The Spirit speaking in the scriptures, is judge of all controversies, Isa. 8. 20. To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them; And of this also, Whether a man be savingly in covenant with God, or not. Therefore do not mock God, whilst you seem to search after such a thing. If we prove from scripture, which is the uncontroverted rule, that you are gracious, and have stricken covenant savingly with God; then resolve to grant so much, and to acquiesce in it: And if the contrary appear, let there be a determination of the controversy, else you do but mock the Lord, and so your bands shall be made strong, Isa. 28. 22. For, a jot of his word cannot fail, Matth. 3. 18. Therefore seek eye-salve from Christ, to judge of things according as the word of God shall discover them to be.

C H A P. II.

Reasons why so few come to the clear knowledge of their interest in Christ.

THE Fourth thing to be premised, is, Although the matter of a man's interest in Christ, be of so great importance, and the way to attain to the knowledge of it, so plainly held forth in the scriptures; yet there be but few who reach the direct knowledge of it: And that this may not discourage any person from attempting it, I shall hint some few reasons, why so few come to the distinct knowledge of it; which will also prepare the way for what is to be spoken afterwards.

The

The first thing which doth hinder many from the knowledge of their Interest in Christ, is their ignorance of some special Principles of Religion: As, I. That it was free Love in God's Bosom, and nothing in Man, that moved him to send a Saviour to perfect the work of Redemption, John 3. 16. God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son. Men are still seeking some Ground for that Business in themselves, which leads away from suitable and high Apprehensions of the first spring and rise of God's covenant favour to his people, which hath no Reason, Cause, or Motive in us; and so they cannot come to the knowledge of their Interest.

II. They are ignorant how that Love doth effectually discover it self to a Man's heart, so as he hath Ground to lay a claim to it, viz. That ordinarily it doth, First, Discover his broken state in himself, because of sin and corruption defiling the whole man, and any thing in him that might be called a Righteousness; All those Things are Loss and Dung, Philip. 3. 6. 7. 8. Secondly, It discovereth Christ as the full and satisfying Treasure, above all things; The Man finds a Treasure, for which, with Joy he selleth all, &c. Matth. 13. 44. 46. Thirdly, It determineth the heart, and causeth it approach unto a living God in the ordinances, Psal. 65. 4. Blessed is the Man whom thou choolest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts. And causeth the heart to wait upon him, and him alone. Psal. 62. 5. My Soul, wait thou only upon God. Thus having drop'd in the Seed of God in the heart, and formed Christ there, Gal. 4. 19. The Heart is changed and made new in the forsaide Work, Ezek. 36. 26. And God's Law is so stamped upon the heart in that change, Jer. 31. 33, That the whole Yoke of Christ

Christ is commended to the Man without Exception, Rom. 6. 12. 16. The law is acknowledged good, holy, just and spiritual. Upon all which, from that new principle of life, there flow out Acts of a new life, Gal. 5: 6. Faith worketh by Love, Rom. 7. 13. 22. And the man becometh a Servant of righteousness, and unto God: Which doth especially appear in the spirituallity of Worship, John 4. 24. Rom. 7, 6. Men then serve God in Spirit and Truth; and in the newness of the Spirit, and not in the Oldness of the letter; and Tenderness in all manner of Conversation, the man then exerciseth himself how to keep a Conscience void of offence toward God and toward Man, Acts 24. 16. Now, this Way doth the Love of God discover it self unto the Man, and acteth on him, so as he hath ground of laying some good Claim to it: so as he may justly think, that the Love which sent a Saviour, had respect to such a Man as hath found these things made out unto him. Surely Ignorance in this, doth hinder many from the Knowledge of their Interest in Christ: for, if a Man know not how God worketh with a Person, so as he may justly lay Claim to his Love, which was from Eternity, he will wander in the Dark and not come to the Knowledge of an Interest in him.

III. Many are also ignorant of this, That God alone is the hope of his People: He is called the hope of Israel, Jer. 14. 8. Although inherent Qualifications are evidences of it, yet the staying of the heart upon him, as a full Blessing, and satisfying Portion, is Faith, 1 Pet. 1. 21. The Faith and Hope must be in God; and the only proper Condition which giveth Right to the staying Blessings of the Covenant, Rom. 4. 5. To him that worketh not, but believeth. Faith is counted for Righteousness. Indeed if any Person take Liberty here, and turn Grace into wantonness, there

is, without doubt, in so far, a delusion, since there is mercy with him upon condition that it conciliate fear to him, Psal. 150. 4. Yes, hardly can any man, who hath found the foresaid expressions of God's love made out upon him, make a cloke of the covenant for sinful liberty, without some measure of a spiritual conflict; in this respect. He that is born of God, doth not sin, and, He that doth so sin, hath not seen God. 1 John 3. 6. 9. I say, God is the hope of his people, and not their own holiness. If they intend honesty, and long seriously to be like unto him, many failings should not weaken their hope and confidence; for it is in him who changeth not, Mal. 3. 6. And if any man sinneth, he hath an advocate, 1 John 2. 1. Now, when men place their hope in any other thing beside the Lord, it is no wonder they be kept in a staggering condition, according to the changes of the thing, which they make the ground of their hope since they give not to God the glory due to his name, and which he will not give to another: Compare Psal. 9. 10. They who know thy name, will put their trust in thee, with Isa. 42. 8. My glory will I not give to another: I am the Lord, that is my name.

IV. Many are ignorant of the different ways and degrees of God's working with his people, and this doth much darken their knowledge, and reflex acts of their interest in him. This ignorance doth run mainly on three heads. I. They are ignorant of the different degrees and ways of that law-work, which ordinarily dealth with men, and of the different ways how the Lord bringeth home people at first to Christ, They consider not that the Jaylor is not kept an hour in bondage, Acts 10. Paul is kept in suspense three days, Acts 9, Zaccheus not one moment, Luke 19. II. They are ignorant of, at
least

least they do not consider, how different the degrees of sanctification are in the saints, and the honourable appearings thereof before men in some, and the sad blamishing thereof in others: Some are very blameless and more free of gross out-breakings, adorning their profession much, as Job, Job 1. and Zacharias, Luke 1. These are said to be perfect and upright fearing God and eschewing evil; righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Others were subject to every gross and sad evils, as Solomon, Asa, &c: III. They are ignorant of the different communications of God's face, and expressions of his presence, Some do walk much in the light of God's countenance, and are much in sensible fellowship with him, as David was: Others are all their days kept in bondage through fear of death, Heb, 2. 15. Surely the ignorance of the different ways of God's working and dealing with his people, doth very much darken the knowledge of their interest in him, whilst they usually stint the Lord to one way of working, which he doth not keep, as we have shewed in the former examples.

The Second thing which doth darken men about their interest in Christ, is, There is one thing or other, wherein their heart, in some respect, doth condemn them, as dealing deceitfully and guilefully with God; It is not to be expected, that these can come to clearness about their interest, whose heart doth condemn them for keeping up some known transgression against the Lord, which they will not let go, neither are using the means which they know to be appointed by God, for delivering them from it: Neither can these come to clearness, who know some positive duty commanded them in their station, which they deceitfully shift and shun, not closing cheerfully with it, or not willing to be led into it, these are also,

also, in some respect, condemned of their own heart, as the former sort: and in that case it is difficult to come to a distinct knowledge of their state, 1 John 3. 21, If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God. It is supposed there, There a self condemning heart maketh void a man's confidence proportionally before God.

I do not deny but that men may, on good Grounds, plead an interest in Christ, in the case of prevailing iniquity, Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me: As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. Rom 7. 23. 24. 25. I see another law in my Members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death! I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God; but with the Flesh, the law of sin. But it is hard to be attained, if at all attainable, when the heart is dealing deceitfully, and entertaining known Guile in a particular; therefore, let People clear themselves of the Particular which they know too well. It is the thing which doth meet them, marring their confidence and Access in all their Approaches unto God; see Judges 10. 10.-----14. The idolatries of the People are cast up to them by the Lord, and their Suit rejected thereupon. That which draweth away the Heart first in the Morning, and last at night, like an Oven heated at night, and it burneth as a flaming fire in the Morning, (spoken of the wicked. Hose 7. 6. and taketh up their thoughts often on their bed; as it is said of some, Psalms 37. 4. He deviseeth mischief upon his bed, &c, That which doth lead away the heart in Time of religious Duty ordinarily, and the Remembrance

brance of which hath power to enliven and quicken the Spirits, more than the Remembrance of God, so as their heart is after the heart of some detestable thing, Ezek. 11. 21. That which withstandeth men when they would grip the Promise, as God casteth up Mens Sins to them, who are meddling with his covenant, Psal 50, 16. 17. "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth?" &c. That is the thing which doth mar the Knowledge of a gracious state; let it go, and it will be more easy to reach the Knowledge of an interest in Christ.

The Third Thing which hindreth the knowledge of an interest in Christ, is, a Spirit of Sloth, and careless Negligence in many: They complain that they know not whether they be in Christ, or not: But, as few take pains to be in him, so few take pains to try if they be in him. It is a work and business which cannot be done sleeping, 2 Cor. 13. 5, "Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith; Prove your own selves: Know ye not your own selves? &c. The several words used there, viz. Examine, Prove, Know,---say that there is a Labour in it: Diligence must be used to make our calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. It is a business above Flesh and Blood; the holy anointing which teacheth all things, 1 John 2. 20. 27. must make us know the things freely given us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. Shall the Lord impart a business of so great concernment, and not so much as be enquired after to do it for men? Ezek. 36. 37.

Be ashamed, you who spend so much time in reading of Romances, in adorning your persons, in Hawking and Hunting, in consulting the Law anent your outward state in the world, and it may be in worse things than these: Be ashamed
that

that you spend so little time in the search of this. Whether you be an heir of glory, or not, whether you be in the way that leadeth to heaven, or that way which will land you in darkness for ever. You who judge this below you, and unworthy of your pains, any part or minute of your time; it is like, in God's account, you have judged yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, so as you shall have no lot with God's people in this matter.

The Fourth thing that doth darken the knowledge of an interest in Christ, is, Men do not condescend upon what would satisfy them; they complain that God will not shew unto them what he is about to do with them; but cannot yet say, they know what would satisfy anent his purpose. This is a sad thing. Shall we think those are serious, who have never, as yet, pitched on what would satisfy them, nor are making earnest enquiry after what would satisfy. If the Lord had left us in the dark in that matter, we were less excusable: But since the grounds of satisfaction, and the true marks of an interest in Christ, are so clear and frequent in scripture, and so many things written, that our joy may be full, 1 John 1. 4. And that those who believe may know; that they have eternal life, 1 John 5. 13. And since he that believeth hath a witness of it in himself, 1 John 5. 10. None can pretend excuse here: We may not here insist to shew what may and should satisfy anent our interest, since we are to speak directly to it afterwards.

The Fifth thing that helpeth much to keep men in the dark, anent their interest in Christ, is, They pitch upon some mutable grounds, which are not so opposite proofs of the truth of an interest in Christ, as of the comfortable state of a triumphing soul sailing before the wind; and marks, which I grant are precious in themselves,
and

and do make out an interest clearly where they are: yet they are such, as without which an interest in Christ may be, and be known also in a good measure: We shall touch a few of them.

I. Some think, That all who have a true interest in him, are above the prevailing power of every sin; but this is contrary to that of Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me: As for my transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. Where we find that holy man laying just claim to pardon, in the case of prevailing iniquity: And that of Rom. 7, 23. 24. 25. where Paul thanketh God through Christ, as freed from the condemnation of the law, even whilst a law in his members leadeth captive unto sin.

II. Some think, That all true saints have constantly access unto God in prayer, and sensible returns of prayer at all times; but this is contrary to the many sad exercises of his people, complaining often that they are not heard nor regarded of God, Psal. 13. 1. "How long wilt thou forget me O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me? Psal. 22. 1. 2. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent."

III. Some think, That all who have any true interest in him, have God witnessing the same unto them by a high operation of that witnessing spirit of his, spoken of, Rom. 8. 16. The spirit itself beareth witness with the spirit, that we are the children of God. Whereof afterwards: And so they still suspect their own interest in Christ, because of the want of this; but they do not remember, that they must first believe and give credit to that record which God hath given of the Son, that there is life enough in him, for men.

1 John 5. 11, And then look for the seal and witness of the Spirit, Eph. 1. 15. In whom, after ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, &c. As long as people hold fast these principles, and the like, they can hardly come to the knowledge of their gracious state, which God hath warranted people to prove and clear up to themselves, otherwise than by these fore-said things.

C H A P. III:

Some Mistakes concerning an Interest in Christ removed.

TH E Fifth Thing to be promised, is, The Removal of some Mistakes, whereinto People may readily run themselves, when we are about to prove their interest in Christ.

As, I. It is a mistake to think, That every one who is in Christ, doth know that he is in him; for many are truly gracious, and have a good Title to Eternal Life, who doth not know so much, until it be made out afterwards, 1 John 5. 13. These Things are written to Believers, that they may know they have a true Title to Eternal Life; that is, that they may know they are Believers, and so it is Supposed they knew it not before.

II. It is a Mistake to Think, That all who come to the Knowledge of their interest of Christ, do attain an Equal Certainty about the same: One may say, "He is Perswaded nothing Present or to come, can Separate him from the Love of God, Rom. 8. 38. Another cometh but this Length, I Believe, help my Unbelief Mark 9. 24:

III. It is a Mistake to Think, That every one who attaineth a strong Perswasion of his interest, doth

doth always hold there; for he who to Day may say of the Lord, He is his Refuge, Psal. 91. 2. and his Portion. Psal. 119. 57. will at another Tim say, He is cut off, Psal. 31. 22. and will ask if the Truth of God's Promise doth fail for evermore? Psal. 67. 7. 8. 9.

IV. It is also a Mistake to think, That every one who doth attain a good Knowledge of their gracious State can Formally Answer all Objections made to the contrary; but yet they may hold fast the Conclusion, and say, I know whom I have believed, 2 Tim. 1. 12. There be few Grounds of the Christian Religion, whereof many People are so Perswaded, as that they are able to maintain them Formally against all Arguments brought to the Contrary, and yet they may and will hold the Conclusion Stedfastly and Justly: So it is in this case in Hand.

V. It is no less a Mistake to imagine, That the Vain, Groundless Confidence, which many Profane Ignorant Athiests do Mainrain, is this Knowledge of an interest in Christ, which we plead for; many do Falsly Avow him to be their Father, John 8. 41. And many look for Heaven, who will be Beguiled with those Foolish Virgins, Matth. 25. 12. Yet we must not think, because of this, That all Knowledge of an interest is a Delusion and Fancy, although these Fools be deceived; For whilst Thousands are Deceived, some can say on good and solid Grounds: We know that we are of God, and that the whole World lieth in Wickedness, 1 John 5. 19.

C H A P. IV.

The Ways by which the Lord draweth some to Christ, without a sensible Preparatory Law-work.

HAVING Pretailed these things, it now Followeth, that we give some marks by which

which a Man may know if he be Savingly in Covenant with God, and hath a special interest in Christ. so as he may Warrantably lay Claim to God's Favour and Salvation. We shall only Pitch upon two great and Principal Marks, not Willing to trouble People with many.

But before we fall upon these, we will Speak of a Preparatory Work of the Law, whereof the Lord doth Ordinarily make Use to Prepare his own Way in Men's Souls. This may have its own Weight, as a Mark, with some Persons. It is called, The Work of the Law, or, The Work of Humiliation. It hath some Proportion to that Spirit of Bondage, Rom. 8. 15. And doth, now under the Testament, Answer unto it, and Usually Leadeth on to the Spirit of Adoption.

Only here let it be Remembred, 1. That we are not to speak of this Preparatory work of the Law, as a Negative Mark of a true interest in Christ, as if none might lay Claim to God's Favour, who have not had this Preparatory Work in the several steps of it, as we are to speak of it; for, as we shall hear, the Lord doth not always keep that Path with Men. 2. The great reason why we speak of it, is Because the Lord dealeth with many, who he doth effectually call, by some such Preparatory Work: And to those, who have been so dealt with, it may prove strengthening, and will confirm them in laying the more weight on the Marks which follow. 3. It may help to encourage others, who are under such bondage of Spirit, as a good Prognostick of a gracious Work to follow; for, as we shall Circumstantiate it, it will be rarely found to Miscarry and fail of a gracious issue. 4. Where God useth such a Preparatory Work, he doth not keep one Way or measure in it, as we shall hear.

For the more distinct handling of this Preparatory

ratory work, we shall shortly hint the most ordinary ways, by which the Lord leadeth People in unto the covenant savingly, and draweth them unto Christ.

First, There are some called from the womb, as John the baptist was, Luke 1. 41, 44. or in their very young years, before they can be deeply engaged actively in Satan's ways, as Timothy, 2 Tim. 3. 15. It cannot be supposed, That those have such a preparatory work as we are to speak of, And because some persons may pretend to this way of effectual calling, we offer these marks of it, whereby those who have been so called, may be confirmed,

I. Such use, from their childhood, to be kept free of ordinary pollutions, wherewith children usually are defiled ; as swearing, lying, mocking of religion, and religious persons, &c. Those whom God calleth effectually, he sanctifieth them from the time of that effectual calling : sin cannot have dominion over them, as over others, because they are under grace Rom. 6. 14,

II. Religion is, as it were, natural to them ; I mean, they need not be much pressed to religious duties, even when they are but children : they run willingly that way, because there is an inward principle of love constraining them, 2 Cor. 5. 14. so as they yield themselves servants of righteousness, without outward constraint, Rom. 6. 16.

III. Although such know not when they were first acquainted with God, yet they have afterward such exercises of spirit befalling, as the Saints in Scripture, of whose first Conversion we hear not, do speak of, They are shut out from God, upon some Occasion now and then, and are admitted to come nearer again to their Apprehension : Their Heart is also further broken up by the Ordinances, as is said of Lydia, Acts

Acts 1. 6. 14. And ordinarily they do remember when some special Bit of Religion and Duty, or when some Sin, of which they were not taking notice before, was discovered to them, They who can apply these Things to themselves, have much to say for their effectual calling from their youth.

Secondly, Some are brought in to Christ in a sovereign Gospel-way, when the Lord, by some few Words of Love (swallowing up any Law-work, quickly taketh a Person prisoner at the fist, as he did Zaccheus; Luke 19. and others, who' upon a word spoken by Christ, did leave all and follow him; and we hear no noise of a Law-work, dealing with them before they close with Christ Jesus.

And because some may pretend to this way of calling, we shall touch some things most remarkable in that transaction with Zaccheus, for their clearing and confirmation. 1. He had some desire to see Christ, and such a desire, as made him waive that which some would have judged prudence and discretion, whilst he climbeth up upon a Tree, that he might see him. 2. Christ spake to his heart, and that word took such hold upon him, that presently with Joy he did accept of Christ's Offer, and closeth with Christ his Lord, whilst few of any note were following him. 3. Upon this his heart doth open to the poor, although, it seems, he was a covetous man before. 4. He hath a due impression of his former Ways, evidencing his Respect to Moses his Law, and this he doth signify before all the company then present, not caring to shame himself in such things as probably were not notour to the World. 5. Upon all these things, Christ confirmeth and ratifieth the bargain by his word; recommending to him that Oueness of Interest, which behoved to be between him and

and the Saints, and the Thoughts of his own lost Condition, if Christ had not come and sought him, and found him : All which are clear, Luke. 19. --- 10.

We grant the Lord calleth (me so, and if any can lay Claim to the special Things we have now hinted, they have a good Confirmation of Gods dealing with them from that Scripture, neither are they to vex themselves because of the want of a distinct preparatory Law-work, if their Heart hath yielded unto Christ ; for a law-work is not desirable, except for this End. Therefore Christ doth offer himself directly in the Scripture, and People are invited to come to him : And although many will not come to him who is the Cautioner, until the Spirit of Bondage distress them for their Debt ; yet if any, upon the Knowledge of their lost estate, would flee and yield to Christ, none might warrantably press a Law-work upon them.

As for others whom Christ perswaded by a ; Word to follow him ; whatsoever he did or howsoever he spake to them at his first Meeting with them, we must rationally suppose, that then he discovered so much of their own necessity and his own Fulness and Excellency to them, as made them quit all, and run after him : And if he do so to any, we crave no more, since there is room enough there for the Physician.

So that from all this as some may be confirmed and strengthened, with whom God hath so dealt, so there is no Ground nor Occasion for deluding Souls to flatter themselves in their Condition who remain ignorant and senseless of their own Miseries, and Christ's Allsufficiency, and hold fast Deceit.

Thirdly, There are some brought in to Christ in a way yet more declarative of his free Grace, &c this is, when he effectually calleth men at the Hour of Death, We find somewhat recorded of this Way, in that pregnant Example of the Thief on the Cross,

Luke 23. 39-----43. Although this seems not very pertinent for the Purpole in Hand, yet we shall speak a little of it, that on the one Hand men may be sparing to judge and pass sentence upon either themselves or others, before the last Gaspe. And we shall so circumstantiate it, that, on the other Hand, none may dare to delay so great a Business to the last Hour of their Life.

We find these things remarkable in that business between Christ and the Thief: 1 The man falleth at Odds with his former companion. 2. He dareth not speak a wrong Word of God, whose Hand is on him, but justifieth him in all that is befallen him. 3. He now seeth Jesus Christ persecuted by the World, without a Cause, and most injuriously 4. He discovereth Christ to be a Lord and a King whilst Enemies seem to have him at under: 5 He believeth a Being of Glory, after Death, to really, that he preferreth a portion of it to the present Safety of his bodily Life, which he knew Christ was able to grant to him at that Time. and he might have choten that with the other Thief 6. Although he was much abased in himself, and so humbled, that he pleaded but that Christ would remember him, yet he was nobly daring to throw himself upon the Covenant of Life and Death, and he had so much Faith of Christ's Allsufficiency, that he judged a simple Remembrance from Christ, would satisfiyingly do his Business. 7. He acquiesced sweetly in the Word which Christ spake to him for the Ground of his Comfort. All which are very clear in the Case of that poor dying Men and do prove a very real Work of God upon his Heart.

As this Example may encourage some to wait for Good from God, who cannot as yet lay clear Claim to any gracious Work of his Spirit, so we obtest all as they love their Souls, not to delay their Souls business, hoping for such a Cast of Christ's Hand

Hard in the end, as too many do this being a rare miracle of mercy, with the Glory whereof, Christ did honourably triumph over the ignominy of his Cross; a Parallel of which we shall hardly find in all the Scripture beside, Yea, as there be but few at all saved, Mat. 20. 16. Many be called, but few chosen; and most few saved this Way, so the Lord hath peremptorily threatned to laugh at the Calamity, and not to hear the cry of such as mocked formerly at his reproof, & would not hear when he called to them, Prov. 1. 24. 25. 26. Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but ye have seen at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. Which Scripture, although it doth not shut mercy's door upon any, who at the hour of death, do sincerely judge themselves, and flee to Christ, as this penitent thief did, yet it is certain, it implieth that very few, who sit the offer until then, are honoured with repentance, as he was, and so their cry, as not being sincere and of the right stamp, shall not be heard.

C H A P. V.

The work of the law, by which the Lord prepares his way into mens Souls: which is either more violent and sudden, or more calm and gradual.

THE fourth and most ordinary Way by which many are brought in to Christ, is by a clear and discernable Work of the Law and Humiliation which we ordinarily call the Spirit of Bondage as was hinted before. We do not mean that every one, whose conscience is awakened with sin, and Fear of wrath, doth really close with Christ, the

Contrary doth appear in Cain, Saul, Judas, &c. But there is a Conviction of sin awaking of conscience, and work of Humiliation which, as we shall circumstantiate it, doth rarely miscarry or fail of a gracious issue, but ordinarily doth resolve into the Spirit of Adoption, and a gracious work of God's Spirit. And because the Lord dealeth with many sinners this way, and we find that many are much puzzled about the giving judgment of this law-work, we shall speak of it particularly.

This work is either more violent and suddenly expedite, or it is more sober and lent, protracted through a greater length of time, and so as the steps of it are very discernable. It is more violent in some, as in the Jaylor, Paul, and some other converts in the book of the Acts of the Apostles on whom Christ did break in at an instant, and tell on them as with fire and sword, and led them captive terribly, and because some great legal shakings are deceitful, and turn to nothing, if not worse, we shall point at some things remarkable in these converts spoken of before, which did prove the work of the law on them, to have had a gracious issue and result. I. Some word of truth or dispensation, putteth the person to a dreadful stand, with a great stir in the soul: Some are pricked in heart, Acts 2. 37. Some fall on trembling, Acts 16. 20. And this is such a stir, that the person is brought to his wits end: What wilt thou have me to do? saith Paul, Acts 9. 6. What must I do to be saved? saith the Jaylor, Acts 16. 30. II. The person is content to have salvation and God's friendship on any terms, as the questions do import, what shall I do? As if he had said, what would I not do? What would I not forego? What would I not undergo? III. The person accepteth the condition offered by Christ and the servants, as is clear from the forecited scriptures. IV. The person presently becometh of
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one interest with the saints, joining himself with that persecuted society, putting respect on those whom he had formerly persecuted, joining and continuing with them in the profession of Christ, on all hazards. Those with whom the Lord hath so dealt, have much to say for a gracious work of God's spirit in them; and it is like many of them can date their work from such a particular time and word or dispensation: and can give some account of what past between God and them, and of a sensible change following in them, from that time forward, as Paul giveth a good account of the work and way of God with him afterwards, Acts 22.

Again, The Lord sometimes carrieth on this work more calmly, softly and gently, protracting it so, as the several steps of mens exercise under it are very discernable. It would draw a great length to enlarge every step of it? we shall touch the most observable things in it.

I. The Lord layeth siege to men, who, it may be, have often refused to yield to him, offering himself in the ordinances, and by some word preached, read, or born in on the mind, or by some providence leading in unto the word, he doth assault the house kept peaceably by the strong man the devil; and thus Christ, who is the stronger man cometh upon him, Luke 11. 22. And by the spirit of truth, doth fasten the word on the man, in which God's curse is denounced against such and such sins, whereof the man knoweth himself guilty. The spirit convinceth the man, and bindeth it upon him, that he is the same person against whom the word of God doth speak, because he is guilty of such sins: and from some sins the man is led on to see more, until ordinarily he come to see the sins of his youth, sins of omission, &c. Yea he is led on until he see himself guilty, almost of the breach of the whole law; he seeth

innumerable evils compassing him, as David speaketh in a fit of exercise, Psal, 40. 12. A man sometimes will see ugly sights of sins in this case, and is sharp sighted to reckon a sinfulness to every sin almost. Thus the spirit convinceth of sin, John 16 8.

II. The Lord shaketh a special strong hold in the garrison, a refuge of lies to which the man betaketh himself, when his sins are thus discovered to him. The poor man pretendeth to faith in Christ, whereby he thinks his burden is taken off him, as the Pharisees said, John 8. 41. We have one Father, even God. They pretend to a special relation to God as a common Lord. The spirit of God beats the man from this, by the truth of the scriptures, proving that he hath no true faith, and so no interest in Christ, nor any true saving grace, shewing clear differences between true grace and the counterfeit fancies which the man hath in him, and between him and the truly godly, as Christ laboureth to do to those in John 8. 42, 44. If God were your Father, ye would love me. Ye are of the devil, for ye do the lusts of such a Father. So, fear surpriseth the hypocrite in heart, Isa. 33. 14. especially when the Lord discovereth to him conditions in many of these promises, wherein he trusted most, not easily attainable, he now seeth grace and faith another thing than once he judged them to be. We may, in some respect, apply that word here, The spirit convinceth him of sin, because he hath not believed on the Son: He is particularly convinced of unbelief, John 16 9. He seeth now a huge distance between himself and the godly who he thought before outstripped him only in some unnecessary, proud, hateful preciseness, he now seeth himself deluded, and in the broad way with the perishing multitude, and so, in this sight of his misery, coucheth down under his own burden, which, before this time, he thought

thought Christ did bear for him, he now beginneth to fear at the promises, because of that and such other words, what hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, &c? Psal. 50. 16.

III. The man becometh careful about his salvation, and beginneth to take it to heart, as the one thing necessary: he is brought to this with the jaylor, Acts 16: 30. What shall I do to be saved? His salvation was become the leading thing with him: It was least in his thoughts before, but now prevaileth, and other things are much misregarded by him, since his soul is ready to perish, What shall it profit him to gain the world, if he lose his soul? Mat. 16. 26. Some here are much puzzled with the thoughts of an irrevocable decree to their prejudice, and with the fears of uncertain death, which may attack them before they get matters put to a point; and some are vexed with apprehensions, that they are guilty of the sin against the holy Ghost, which is unpardonable, and so are driven a dangerous length, Satan still casting up to them many sad examples of people, who have dolefully put an end to their own exercise: But they are in the hand of one who knoweth how to succour them that are tempted, Heb. 2. 18.

IV. When a man is thus in hazard of miscarrying, the Lord useth a work of preventing mercy towards him, quickly and under hand supporting him, and this is by bearing in upon his mind, the possibility of his salvation, leading the man to the remembrance of pregnant proofs of God's free and rich grace, pardoning gross transgressions, such as Manasseh, who was a bloody idolatrous man, and had correspondance with the devil, and yet obtained mercy, 2 Chron. 34. 11. 12. and other scriptures bearing offers of grace and favour indifferently to all who will yield to Christ, whatsoever they have been formerly, so as the man is brought

again to this, What shall I do to be saved? which doth suppose that he apprehendeth a possibility of being saved, else he would not propound the question. He applieth that or the like word to himself, It may be, ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's Anger, Zeph. 2. 3. He findeth nothing excluding him from mercy now, if he have a heart for the thing. Although here, it may be, the man doth not perceive, that it is the Lord who upholdeth, yet afterward he can tell, that when his foot was slipping, God's mercy held him up, as Psal. 94. 17. 18. the Psalmist speaking in another case. And he will afterwards say, when he was as a beast, and a fool in many respects, God held him up by the hand, Psal. 73. 22. 23.

V. After this discovery of a possibility to be saved, there is a work of desire quickned in the soul, which is clear in that same expression, what shall I do to be saved? But sometimes this desire is airted amiss, whilst it goeth out thus, what shall I do that I may work the works of God? John 6. 28. In which case, the man formerly perplexed with fear and care about his salvation, would be at some work of his own to extricate himself, and here he suddenly resolveth to do all that is commanded and to forego every evil way; (yet much miskenning Christ Jesus) and to beginning to take some courage to himself again, establishing his own righteousness, but not submitting unto the righteousness of God, Rom. 10. 3. Whereupon the Lord maketh a new assault on him, intending the discovery of his absolutely broken state in himself, that so room may be made for the cautioner; as Joshua did to the people, when he found them so bold in their undertakings, Josh 24. 18. 19. You cannot serve the Lord, saith he, for he is a holy God, a jealous God. &c. In this new assault, the Lord. 1. bends up against the man, the spirituality of the law, the commandment cometh with a new charge in the

the Spiritual meaning of it, Rom. 7. 9. The law came, saith Paul, viz, in the spiritual meaning of it, Paul had never seen such a sight of the law before. 2. God most holily doth loose the restraining bonds which he had laid upon the man's corruption, and suffereth it not only to boyl and swell within, but to threaten to break out in all the outward members. Thus sin groweth bold, and kicketh at the law, becoming exceeding sinful Rom. 7. 8. 9. But sin taking occasion by the commandment wrought in me all manner of concupiscence, For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. Was then that which is good, made death unto me? God forbid. But sin that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that Sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. 3. The Lord doth discover to the man, more now than ever before, the uncleanness of his righteousness and what spots are in his best things. These things kill the man and he dieth in his own conceit. Rom. 7. 9. and despaireth of relief in himself if it come not from another airth.

VI. After many ups and downs here, ordinarily, the man resolveth some retirement, he desireth to be alone, he cannot keep company as before, like those who in a besieged city, when they see they cannot hold out, and would be glad of any good condition from the besieging enemy, they go to a council, that they may resolve somewhat. So the man here retireth, that he may speak with himself. This is like that, communing with our own heart, Psal. 4. 4. Thus God leadeth to the wilderness, that he may speak to the heart, Hosea 2. 1. When the person is retired the thoughts of heaven which were scattered in former steps of the exercise, do more observably throng in here, we shall reduce them into this method, 1. The man thinks of his

unhappy folly, in bearing arms against God, and here there be large thoughts of former ways, with a blushing countenance, and felt loathing, Eze. 36. 31. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, &c. like that of Psal 51: 3. His sin is ever before him. 2. Then he remembreth how fair opportunities of yielding to God he hath basely lost, his spirit is like to faint when he remembreth that, as is said in another case, Psal. 42. 4. 5. 6. When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me--- Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted in me?--- O my God, my soul is cast down within me-----3. He now thinks of many christians, whom he mocked and despised in his heart, perswading himself now that they are happy, as having chosen the better part, he thinks of the condition of those who wait on Christ, as the Queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants, happy are thy servants; saith she, who stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom, Kings 10. 8. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, &c. Psal. 84. 4. He wisheth to be one of the meanest who have any relation to God, as the prodigal son doth speak, he would be as one of the father's hired servants, Luke 15. 17. 19. 4. Then he calleth to mind, the good report that is gone abroad of God, according to that testimony, Jonah 4. 2. The prophet knew that God was a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, &c. The free and large promises, and offers of grace come in here: and the glorious practices which have past upon sinners of all sorts, according to the same of God in scripture. 5. He thinks with himself, why hath God spared me so long? And why have I got such a sight of my sin? And why hath he kept me from breaking prison at my own hand, in choosing some unhappy outgate? Why hath he

he made this strange change on me? It may be it is in his heart to do me good? O that it may be so-----Although all these thoughts be not in the preparatory work of every one, yet they are with many, and very promising where they are.

VII. Upon all these thoughts and meditations the man more seriously than ever before, resolveth to pray, and to make some essay with God, upon life and death, he concludeth, it can be no worke with him, for if he sit still he perisheth, as the lepers speak, 2 Kings 7. 3. 4. He considereth, with the pinch'd prodigal son, that there is bread enough in the father's house, and to spare, whilst he perisheth for want: So he goeth to God for he knoweth not what else to make of his condition, as the prodigal son doth, Luke 15. 17. 18. And it may be, here he resolveth what to speak: but readily things do vary, when he is sifted before God, as the prodigal son forgot some of his premeditated prayers, Luke 15. 18. 19. 21. "I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came unto his father, and said unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

And now, when he cometh before God, more observedly than ever before. I. He beginneth with the publican afar off, Luke 18. 13. with many through confessions and self-condemnings, whereof he is very liberal, as Luke 15. 21. I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy, &c. II. Now begins his thoughts anent the hearing of his prayer, which he was not wont to question much; he now knows what those expressions of the saints, anent the hearing

of their prayers do import. III. It is observable in this address, that there are many broken sentences. like that of Psal. 6. 3. But thou, O Lord, how long? supplied with sighs and groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom 8. 26. and greedy looking upward, thereby speaking more than can be well exprest by words. IV. There be ordinarily some interruptions and, as it were, diversions, the man speaking sometimes to the enemy, sometimes to his own heart, sometimes to the multitude in the world, as David doth in other cases. Psal. 9. 6. O thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end. Psal. 4. 5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. Psal. 4. 2. O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? V. It is observable here, that sometimes the man wilt halt and be silent, to hear some indistinct whispering of a joyful sound glancing on the mind of some news in some broken word of scripture which, it may be, the man scarcely knoweth to be scripture, or whether it is come from God, or satan to delude him, yet this he hath resolved, only to hear what God the Lord will speak, as upon another occasion, Psal. 85. 8. VI. More distinct promises come into the man's mind, whereupon he essayeth to lay hold, but is beaten off with objections, as in another case the Psalmist is. Psal. 22. 3. 6. But thou art holy. But I am a Worm. Now it is about the dawning of the day with the man, and faith will stir as soon as the Lord imparteth the joyful sound, Psal. 89. 15. This is the substance of the covenant, which may be shortly summed up in these words, Christ Jesus is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

We can speak no further of the man's exercise, as a preparatory work, for, what followeth is more than preparatory, Yet that the exercise may appear complete

complete and full, we shall add here, That after all these things, the Lord, it may be, after many Answers of divers Sorts, mighrily conveyeth the Sound of his Covenant into the Heart, and determineth the Heart to close with it, and God now draweth so to Christ. John 6. 44. and so shapeth out the Heart for him, that the Conception cannot miscarry, for now the Heart is so in Breadth and Length for him, as that lets cannot satisfy, and more is not desired, like that of Psal. 73. 25, Whom have I in heaven but thee? O, whom have I desired on Earth beside thee? The Soul now resolveth to die if he command so yet at his door, and facing to him wards.

We have drawn this preparatory work to some Length, not tying any man to such a work so circumstantiated, only we say the Lord dealeth so with some, and where he so convinceth of sin, corruption and self emptiness, and maketh a man take salvation to heart as the one thing necessary; and setteth him on work in the use of the means which God hath appointed for relief: I say, such a work rarely shall be found to fail of a good Issue and gracious Result.

C H A P. VI

The difference betwixt that preparatory Law-work which hath a gracious Issue, and the convictions of hypocrites.

Object. **H**YPOCRITES and Reprobates have great stirrings of conscience, and deep convictions about sin, setting them on work sometimes, and I do suspect any preparatory work of the Law I ever had, to be but such as they have.

Ans^w. It will be hard to give sure essential differences between the preparatory work in those
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in whom afterwards Christ is formed, and those legal Stirrings, which are sometimes in reprobates. If there were not some gracious Result of these Convictions and Waknings of Conscience in the Lord's People, and other Marks, of which we shall speak afterwards, it were hard to adventure upon any Difference that is clear in these legal Stirrings. Yet for Answer to the Objection, I shall offer some Things, which rarely will be found in the Stirrings of Reprobates, and which are ordinarily found in that Law-work which hath a gracious Issue.

I. The convictions of hypocrites and reprobates are usually confined to some few very gross Transgressions, Saul grants no more but the persecuting of David, 1 Sam. 26. 21. Judas grants only the Betraying of innocent Blood, Matth. 27. 4. But usually those Convictions, by which the Lord prepareth his own way in the soul, although they may begin at one or more gross particular transgressions yet they list not, but the Man is led on to see many Breaches of the Law, and innumerable Evils compassing him, as David speaketh in the Sight of his Sin, Psal. 40. 12. And withal, that universal Conviction, if I may call it so, is not general, as usually we hear senseless Men saying, That in all Things they sin; But it is particular and condescending, as Paul afterwards spake of himself; he not only is the chief of Sinners, but particularly he was a Blasphemer, and persecutor, 1 Tim. 1: 13.

II. The Convictions which Hypocrites have do seldom reach their Corruption, and that Body of Death, which breeds an Averseness from what is good, and strongly inclineth to what is evil. ordinarily when we find Hypocrites speak of themselves in Scripture, they speak loftily, and with some self conceit, both as to their Freedom from Corruption. John 9. 34. The Pharisees say to the poor Man, Thou wast altogether born in Sins, and dost thou teach us? As if they themselves were not

not as corrupt by nature as he, they speak of great Sins, as Hazael did, 2 Kings 8. 13. Am I a Dog, that I should do this great Thing? And also in their Undertakings of Duty, as that Scribe spake, Matth. 8. 19. Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, See how the People do speak, Jer. 42: 2, 3, 4. 5. 6. They undertake to do all that God will command them: So that they still go about, in any case, to establish their own Righteousness, not submitting unto the Righteousness of God, Rom. 10. 3. But I may say, that Convictions and Exercise about Corruption, and that Body of Death, enclining to evil and disabling for good, is not the least part of the work where the Lord is preparing his own Way. They use to judge themselves very wretched because of a Body of Sin, and are at their Wits End, how to be delivered, as Paul speaketh when he is under the Exercise of it afterwards, Rom. 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?

II. It will ordinarily be found, that the Convictions which are in Hypocrites, either are not so serious, as that some other Business will not put them out of head, before any satisfaction be gotten, as in Cain, who went and built a City, and we hear no more of his Convictions, Gen. 4: Felix went away until a more convenient Time, and we hear no more of his Trembling, Acts 24. 25. Or if that Work become very serious, then it runneth to the other Extremity, and despair of Relief, leaving any Room for any Outgate. So we find Judas very serious in his Convictions, yet he drew desperate and hanged himself, Matth. 27. 4. 5. But where the Lord prepareth his own Way, the work is both so serious, as the Person cannot be put off it, until he find some Satisfaction, and yet under that very Seriousness he lieth open for Relief, Both which are clear in the Jaylor's Words, What must

must I to do be saved? Act. 16. 30. This furious enquiry after relief is a very observable thing in the preparatory Work which leadeth on to Christ, Yet we desire none to lay too much weight on these Things, since God hath allowed clear differences between the Precious and the vile.

Object. I still fear I have not had so through a sight of my sin and misery, as the Lord giveth to many whom he effectually calleth, especially to great transgressors, such as I am.

Ans. It is true, the Lord discovereth to some great sights of their sin and misery, and they are thereby put under great legal Terrors: But as all are not brought in by that sensible preparatory law work, as we shewed before, so even those who are dealt with after that way, are very differently and variously exercised, in regard of the degrees of terror, and of the continuance of that work. The Jaylor hath a violent work of very short continuance, Paul hath a work continuing three days, some persons are in bondage through fear of death, all their days. Heb. 2. 15. So that we must not limit the Lord to one way of working. The main thing we are to look unto in these legal wakenings and convictions of sin and misery, is if the Lord reach those ends in us, for which usually these stirrings and convictions are sent into the Soul, and if those Ends be reached, it is well we are not to vex our selves about any preparatory work further. Now, those ends which God driveth ordinarily with sinners, by these legal Terrors and wakenings of Conscience, are four.

First, The Lord discovers sights of mens sin and misery to him, to chase them out of themselves and to put them out of conceit of their own righteousness. Men naturally have great thought of themselves, and do inclin much to the covenant

of works: The Lord therefore doth discover to them so much of their sin and corruption, even in their best things, that they are made to lothe themselves, and to despair of relief in themselves, and so they are forced to flee out of themselves, and from the covenant of works, to seek refuge else where, Heb. 6. 18. They become dead to themselves and the Law, as to the point of Justification, Rom. 7. 4. Then have they no more confidence in the Flesh, Phil. 3. 3. This is supposed in the offers of Christ, coming to seek and save that which is lost, Luke 19. 10. and to be a Physician to those who are sick Matth. 9. 12.

The Second great end is; To commend Christ Jesus to mens hearts above all things, that so they may fall in love with him, & betake themselves to that Treasure and Jewel, which only enricheth, Matth. 13. 44. 46. and by so doing, may serve the Lord's design in the contrivement of the gospel, which was the Manifestation of his free Grace through Christ Jesus in the salvation of men. The sight of a man's own misery, and damnable estate by nature, is a ready way to make him prize Christ highly, who alone can set such a wretch at liberty: Yea it not only leadeth a man to an high esteem of Christ, but also of all Things that relate to that way of Salvation, as Grace, the new Covenant, faith, &c. and maketh him careful to gather and treasure up his Michtams, or golden Scriptures, for the confirmation of his Interest in these Things.

The Third great end is, To deter and fear people from sin, and to make them cast out with it, and consent to put their neck under all his yoke. God kindleth some Sparks of Hell in Mens bosoms by the discovery of their sin, as a ready mean to make them henceforth stand in awe, knowing how bitter a Thing it is to depart from the Lord. Jer. 2. 19. So we find rest offered to the weary, upon
condit on

Condition they will take on Christ's Yoke, Matth. 11. 29. Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart, and ye shall find rest unto your Souls. And God offereth to own Men as their God and Father, upon condition they will allow no peaceable abode to Belial 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 17, 18. What Fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness? and what Communion hath light with darkness? And what Concord hath Christ with Belial? or what Part hath he that believeth with an Infidel? wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing: and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

The Fourth great End is, To work up Men to a patient and thankful submission to all the Master's Pleasure, this is a singular Piece of Work. Ezek. 16. 63. Then shalt thou remember, and be confounded, and never open thy Mouth any more, because of thy Shame when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord. The Sight of a Man's own Vileness and Deserving, maketh him silent, and to lay his hand on his Mouth, whatsoever God doth unto him, Plal. 39. 9. I was dumb, and opened not my Mouth, because thou didst it, Ezra. 9. 13. God hath punished us less than our Iniquities. Micah 7. 9. I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned. The man careth not what God doth to him, or how he deal with him, if he save him from the deserved wrath to come. Also any mercy is a large mercy to him who hath seen such a Sight of himself; he is less than the least of mercies. Gen. 32. 10. Any Crumb falling from the Master's Table is welcome, Matth. 15. 27. He thinks it rich Mercy that he is not consumed, Lam. 3. 22. This is the Thing that marvellously maketh God's poor crossed People so silent under, and satisfied

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fied with their lot; nay they think he deserveth hell who openeth his mouth at any thing God doth to him, since he hath pardoned his transgressions.

So then, for satisfying the objection, I say, If the Lord hath driven thee out of thy self, and commended Christ to thy heart above all things, and made thee resolve, on his strength, to wage war with every known transgression, and thou art in some measure, as a weaned child, acquiescing in what he doth unto thee, desiring to lay thy hand on thy mouth thankfully, then thy convictions of sin and misery, and whatsoever thou dost plead as a preparatory work, is sufficient, and thou art to debate no more anent it: only be advised to study new discoveries of the sense of thy lost condition every day, because of thy old and new sins, and also to see fresh help in Christ, who is a priest for ever to make intercession, and to have the work of sanctification and patience with thankfulness renewed and quickned often: For somewhat of that work which abaseth thee, exalteth Christ, and conformeth to his will, must convey thee throughout all thy lifetime in this world.

C H A P. VII.

Of Faith.

WE come now to speak of some more clear and sure marks, by which men may take up their gracious state and interest in Christ. The first thing whereby men may know it, is, their closing with Christ in the gospel wherein he is held forth. This is believing, or faith, which is the condition of the covenant, Rom. 4. 16. It is of faith, &c. Acts 16. 31. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Now although in propriety of speech, it is hard to prove an interest

interest by faith, it being our very interest in him: yet the heart closing with Christ Jesus, is so discernable in it self that we may well place it amongst the marks of a gracious state: And if a man can make out this, that he believeth on and in Christ Jesus, he thereby doth prove a very true interest in him.

Many do fear at this, as a mark, upon one of these three grounds ordinarily.

I. Some conceive faith to be a difficult mysterious thing, hardly attainable. To these I say, do not mistake, faith is not so difficult as many do apprehend it to be: I grant true faith, in the meanest degree, is the gift of God, and above the power of flesh and blood, for God must draw men to Christ, John 6.44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Phil. 1. 29. Unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, to believe on him. Yet it were a reflection upon Christ, and all he hath done, to say it were a matter of insuperable difficulty, as is clear, Rom. 10. 6. 7. 11. The righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise, say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above) Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring Christ again from the dead) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed it were, according to that scripture, as much upon the matter, as to say, Christ came not from heaven, is not risen from the dead, or ascended victorious

to the heaven, I say, he hath made the way to heaven most easy, and faith, which is the condition required on our part, more easy than men do imagine. For the better understanding of this, consider that justifying faith is not to believe that I am elected, or to believe that God loveth me, or that Christ died for me, or the like, these things are indeed very difficult, and almost impossible at the first hand to be won at by those who are serious, whilst natural atheists, and deluded hypocrites find no difficulty in asserting all those things: I say, true justifying faith is not any of the foresaid things, neither is it simply the believing of any sentence that is written, or that can be thought upon. I grant, he that believeth on Christ Jesus, believeth what God hath said anent man's sinful miserable condition by nature, and he believeth that to be true, that there is life in the son who was slain, and is risen again from the dead, &c. But none of these, nor the believing of many such truths, do speak out justifying faith, or that believing on the Son of God, spoken of in scripture, for then it were simply an act of the understanding: But true justifying faith, which we now seek after, as a good mark of an interest in Christ, is chiefly and principally an act or work of the heart and will, having presupposed sundry things about truth in the understanding, with the heart it is believed unto righteousness, Rom. 10. 10. And altho' it seem, verse 9. of that chapter, that a man is saved upon condition that he believe *his* truth, God raised Christ from the dead, yet we must understand another thing there, and verse 10. than the believing the truth of that proposition: For, beside that all devils have that faith whereby they believe, that God raised Christ from the dead: so the scripture hath clearly resolved justifying faith into a receiving of Christ, John 1. 12. As many as received him to them gave he power to become the Sons of God even to them that believe on his name

Then

The receiving of Christ is there explained to be the believing on his name. It is still called a staying on the Lord, Isa. 26. 3. A trusting in God often mentionend in the Psalms, and the word is a leaning on him. It is a believing on Christ, John 6. 29. This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent, and often so exprest in the new testament. When God maketh men believe savingly, he is said to draw them unto Christ, and when the Lord inviteth them to believe, he calleth them to come to him, John 6. 37. 44. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. The kingdom of heaven is like a man finding a jewel, wherewith he falleth in love, Matth. 13. 44. 45. 46. Now, I say, this acting of the heart on Christ Jesus. is not so difficult a thing as is conceived. Shall that be judged a mysterious difficult thing, which doth consist much in desire? If men have but an appetite, they have it? for they are blessed that hunger after righteousness, Matth. 5. 6. If you will, you are welcome, Rev. 22. 17. Is it a matter of such intricacy and insuperable difficulty, greedily to look so that exalted Saviour? Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me, and be saved all the ends of the earth: And to receive a thing that is offered, held forth and declared to be mine, if I will but accept and take it, and in a manner open my mouth, and give way to it, Psal. 81. 10. Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it. Such a thing is faith, if not less. Oh, if I could perswade people what is justifying faith, which impropriateth Christ to me? We often fear people from their just rest and quiet by making them apprehend faith to be some deep mysterious thing, and by moving unnecessary doubts about it, whereby it is needlessly darkned

II. Some make no use of this mark, as judging it a high presumptuous Crime, to pretend to so excellent a thing as is the very Condition of the new Covenant. To these, I say, You need not startle so much at it, as if it were high Pride to pretend to it : For whatsoever true Faith be, Men must resolve to have it, or nothing at all, all other Marks are in vain without it, a Thousand things besides will not do the business : Unless a Man believe, he abideth in the state of Condemnation, John 3. 18. 36. He that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

III. Others do not meddle with this noble Mark of Faith, because they judge it a Work of the greatest Difficulty, to find out Faith where it is, To these I say, It is not so difficult to find it out, since he that believeth, hath the witness in himself, 1 John 5. 10. It is a Thing which, by some serious Search may be known, Not only may we do much to find it out by the preparatory Work going before it in many, as the apprehending and believing of a mans lost Estate, and that he cannot do his own Business, and that there is satisfying Fulness in Christ, very desirable, if he could overtake it ; a serious minding of this, with a heart laid open for Relief ; as also by the ordinary companions and Concomitants of it, viz. the liking of Christ's dominion, his Kingly and propheticall Office, a Desire to resign my self Wholly up to him, to be at his disposing : As also by the native Consequences of it, viz. the Assailing of the Word, the Assailing of my own Conscience according to the Word, a Heart purifying Work working by Love, &c. I say, not only may we know Faith by these Things, but it is discernable by it self, and of its own Nature, although I deny not but there must be some Help of God's Spirit

by which we know what is freely given unto us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. As also, that God hath allowed many evidences and marks, as precious helps, whereby men may clear up faith more fully to themselves, 1 John 5. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life, Yet I still say, that faith, or believing, which is some acting of the heart upon Christ in the gospel, and the transacting with him there, is discernable of it self, and by it self, to a judicious understanding Person with an ordinary influence of the Spirit, unless the Lord, for reasons known to himself, do overcloud a man's reflex light, by which he should take up, and perceive what is in him.

This justifying faith, which we assert to be so discernable, is in the Lord's deep wisdom, and gracious condescendence, variously exprest in scripture according to the different actings of it upon God, and outgoings after him, so as every one who hath it, may find and take it up in his own mould, It sometimes acting by a desire of union with him in Christ: This is that looking to him in Isa. 45. 22. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth. This seems to be a weak act of faith, and far below other actings of it at other times, perhaps in that same person. Men will look to what they dare not approach, to their apprehension, which dare not touch or embrace, they may look to one to whom they dare not speak Yet God hath made the promise to Faith in that acting, as the forecited Scripture doth shew, and this he hath done mercifully and wisely, for this is the only discernable way or the acting of faith in some persons sometimes. Such are the actings or Outgoings of Faith exprest in Scripture; by hungering and thirsting after righteousness, Matth. 5. 6. And that exprest by willing, Rev. 22: 17,

And

And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Again, this faith goeth out sometimes in the act of recumbency, or leaning on the Lord, the soul taketh up Christ then as a resting stone, and God hath so held him out, altho' he be a stumbling-stone to others, Rom. 9. 33. This acting of it is hinted in the expressions of trusting and staying on God so often mentioned in scripture, and precious promises are made to this acting of faith as Isa. 26. 3, 4. God will keep them in perfect peace, whose minds are stayed on him: because such do trust in him. Trust in the Lord, for with him is everlasting strength. So Psal. 125. 1. They that trust in the Lord, shall be as mount Zion, which abideth for ever. I say the Lord hath made promises to this way of faith's acting, as knowing it will often go out after him in this way, with many persons, and this way of its acting will be most discernable to them.

It goeth out after God sometimes by an act of waiting, when the soul hath somewhat depending before God, & hath not got out his mind satisfyingly about that thing: then faith doth wait, and so it hath the promise, Isa. 49. 23. They shall not be ashamed that wait for me. Sometimes it acteth in a wilful way upon the Lord, when the Soul apprehendeth God thrusting it away and threatening its ruin; so, Job 13. 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him. The faith of that poor woman of Canaan, Mat. 15. 22---28. so highly commended by Christ, did go out in this way of wilful acting over difficulties, and the Lord speaketh much good of it and to it, because some will be put to it, to exercise faith that way sometimes, and so they have that for their encouragement. It were tedious to instance all the several ways of the acting of faith upon and its exercise about, and outgoing after Christ. I may say according to the various conditions

and pressures of the soul of man, the Lord hath variously held out himself, and his fulness In Christ, under divers notions, as might most fitly meet the distress or condition of men. And accordingly, faith which God hath appointed to traffick and travel between Christ and man, as the Instrument of conveyance of his fulness unto man, and of maintaining union & communion with him, acteth variously and differently upon God in Christ: For faith is the very shaping out of a man's heart according to God's device of salvation by Christ Jesus in whom it pleased the Father, that fulness should dwell; so that, let Christ turn what way he will, faith airteth and pointeth that way. Now he turneth all ways in which he can be useful to poor men, and therefore faith acteth accordingly on him for drawing out of that fulness, according to a man's case and condition. As for example, the soul is naked, destitute of a covering to keep it from the storm of God's wrath: Christ is fine raiment, Rev. 3. 17. 18. Then accordingly faith's work here, is to put on the Lord Jesus, Gal. 3. 27. The Soul is hungry and thirsty after somewhat that may everlastingly satisfy; Christ Jesus is milk, wine, water, the bread of life, and the true Manna. Isa. 55. 1, 2. John 6. 48,---31. He is the Feast of fat things, and of wine refined, Isa. 25. 6. Then the work and exercise of faith is, to go, buy, eat and drink abundantly, Isa. 55. 1. John 6, 53, 57. The soul is pursued for guilt, more or less, and is not law bidding: Christ Jesus is the city of refuge, and the high Priest there, during whole lifetime, that is for ever, the poor man who wins thither, is safe: then the work and exercise of faith is, to flee thither for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us, Heb. 6. 18. In a word, whatsoever way he may benefit poor man, so he speaketh of himself: And as he holdeth out himself in the scripture, so faith doth point towards him

him. If he be a bridegroom, Faith will go out in a marriage relation; If he be a Father, Faith pleadeth the man to be a Child; If he be a Shepherd, faith pleads the man may be one of his sheep; If he be a Lord, Faith calleth him so, which none can do but by the Spirit of Jesus, 1 Cor. 12: 3. If he be dead and risen again for our justification, Faith believeth God hath raised him on that account. Rom. 10. 9. Wherever he be, there would faith be, and whatsoever he is, faith would be somewhat proportionally: For by faith the heart is shapen out in breadth and length for him, yea when the fame and report of him goeth abroad in his truth, although faith seeth not much, yet it believeth on his name upon the very fame he hath sent abroad of himself, John 1. 12.

But here for avoiding of mistakes consider,
I. That although justifying faith acteth so variously, yet every believer, who hath a good title to Christ Jesus hath not all these various actings and exercises of faith, for his condition craveth them not. And also the master is pleased not to lead out the faith of some persons, at some times in some of these ways, for reasons known to himself, even when their necessity (to their apprehension) calleth for such acting of faith, Surely, every one dare not say. Though he kill me yet will I trust in him. Many would not have gone up with the woman of Canaan 'spoken of, Matth. 15. But would have been discouraged, and have quit the pursuit, It is on this account, that Christ doth highly commend the faith of some beyond the faith of others, Matth. 8. 10. of the Centurion, Matth. 15. 28. of the woman of Canaan. Many good people are much disquieted anent their faith, because it goeth not out in all those ways we find recorded in scripture, but there is hardly any man will be found, whose faith hath acted all these ways.

II. Many of these actings of faith are much intended and remitted. They are sometimes strong and vigorous, and discernable, and sometimes they fail and misbelief doth prevail ? so as it were an uncertain thing to judge of a man's state by these we find the saints very different from themselves, in regard of the actings of faith sometimes, as we shewed before.

III. Each one of these actings of faith, speaketh good to the person in whom it is, and hath promises annexed unto it, as we have said, Yet,

IV. Although those actings of faith have promises annexed unto them, they are not for that the condition of the new covenant ; for then every one behoved to have each one of them, which is not true, as we said before. A promise is made to him, who overcometh, but perseverance is not the condition of the new covenant but doth suppose it. there are promises made to the exercise of all graces in scripture, but only faith is the condition of the covenant. I say then, these promises are made to these actings of faith, not as such, but as they do suppose justifying faith, which is the condition of the covenant. All these are actings of faith, but not as it is justifying. Therefore,

V. There is somewhat common to all gracious persons, which may be supposed by all the foresaid actings of faith, wherein the nature and essence of justifying faith standeth. And this is the heart's Satisfaction anent God's Device of salvation by Christ ; when Man pleaseth God's invention and satisfaction to justice, through Christ Jesus, in whom all fulness doth dwell now by the father's pleasure, when the soul and heart of man acquiesceth in that, then it believeth unto salvation. As at first the Lord made man suitable to the covenant of works, by creating him perfect, and so putting him in a capacity to perform his will in that covenant ; so under the new covenant, when God giveth the
new

new heart to man, he sette h the idea and stamp of all his device in the new covenant upon the man, so as there is a consonancy to God's will there: Thus he beareth the image of the second Adam, Christ Jesus, on him. This is a great part of the new heart, and is most opposed to works; since now the man absolutely falleth off works, becometh dead to the law, as to the point of justification by the body of Christ. Rom, 7. 4. Man perceiving that God hath devised a way of satisfying divine justice, and recovering lost man by the incarnation of Christ, he thinks this so good and sure a way, that he absolutely giveth up with the law, as I said before, and closeth with this device: And this is believing or faith, very opposite to works and all resting thereupon. This cannot fail to be in all gracious persons, in whom many of the actings of faith are not to be found. This doth clearly suppose known distreis in a man, without all relief in himself; this supposeth known fulness in Christ, as the alone sufficient relief, this imports a sort of Impropriation: For the Heart pleasing that device in so far swayeth towards it. This is a thing clearly supposed in all the actings of faith, spoken of before. He that greedily hungrerh hath this; and he that leanerh, hath this, and he that puts on Christ, hath this &c. This is to esteem Christ the wisdom and power of God to Salvation; so is he said to be to all that believe, 1 Cor. 1. 24. they esteem that device wise and sure befeeming God, and that is to believe. On this account, Christ who is the rejected stone to many, is precious to them who believe; a fit stone to recover, fortify & beautify the tottering building and Fabrick of lost man. To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable

to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is contained in the scriptures, Behold I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious, and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore, which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner: And a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed, 1 Pet. 2. 4, 8. The kingdom of God is like a man finding a treasure, for which, with Joy, he selleth all. Matth. 13. 44. These words hold out the very way of believing, viz. Salvation is discovered in the gospel, to be by Christ; the heart valueth that invention as satisfying: This is to believe on the Son of God lised up; which is compared with the looking to the brazen Serpent John 3. 14. It was man's approbation of that device which made it effectual for his healing, so is it here, he that so believeth, setteth to his Seal, that God is true, John 3. 33: True, Wherein? In that record he hath born, that God hath provided life for men, and placed it all in Christ, 1 John 5. 10, 11. He that believeth not, maketh God a Liar. Wherein? In his saying that Christ is a false and sure way to heaven. This is the pleasing and acquiescing in that device, and it is consonant to all I know spoken of justifying faith in scripture. This is the believing on Christ, and on his name, the receiving of him, and resting on him for Salvation, in our catechism, the believing that Jesus is the Christ, that is, the Anointed One, whom the Father hath sealed, and set apart, and qualified for the work of reconciling man unto God, and he that believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, 1 John 5. 1. This is to believe with the heart, that God hath raised Christ from the dead, Rom. 10. 9. The man believeth Christ dead, and is raised

railed on the account of satisfaction for man's transgression. Devils may believe that: Nay, but the man I speak of, believeth it with his heart, (which no natural man doth, until a new heart be given unto him) that is; he cordially pleaseth, is satisfied with and acquiesceth in this noble Invention. And this faith layeth out it self now and then in its actings, outgoings and exercise, according to all the covenant relations, under which Christ is held forth in the scripture.

Now, I say, This faith is discernable, not only in these actings many times: A man may know if his heart doth hunger after Christ, and flee for refuge to him, when pursued. and if he doth commit himself unto God, &c. but also in its very nature: As it is justifying it is discernable, and may be known: A man may clearly know, if from known distress in himself; upon the report and fame of Christ's tulnets, his heart doth please God's device in the new covenant if it goeth out after Christ in that invention, and pleaseth him as Lord of the life of men, terminating and resting there, and no where else, acquiescing in that contrivment with desire and complacency.

This is a discernable thing: Therefore I obtest men impartially to examine themselves, and if they find that their heart has closed so with that device of salvation, and is gone out after him as precious, that thereupon they conclude a sure and true Interest in Christ Jesus; and good claim and title to the crown, 'since he that believeth shall never perish, but have everlasting life,' John 3. 16, 36:

C H A P. VIII.

The difference between the faith of hypocrites and true saving justifying faith.

Object. **H**YPOCRITES and Reprobates have a Sort of Faith and are said to believe

believe, John 2, 23, 24. Many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, Acts 8. 13. Then Simon, the forcerer, himself believed also; and cannot choose but go out after Christ, and that device of salvation, when they hear of it, and they profess they do so, yet are deluded, and so may I be.

Ans^r. To say nothing of that thought of your heart, (whereby you wonder that any man should not please the device of Salvation by Christ, and lead out towards him) as a very Promising thing, and speaking out justifying faith to be in your bosom: and, to say nothing in contradiction to that which you think, that a natural man whilst such, and before he get a new heart, can please that device, and believe with his heart, and affectionately, that which perfectly overthroweth the covenant of works, and abaseth men in the point of Self righteousness already attained, or that can be won at by him, which is inconsistent with many scriptural truth; I offer these differences between the faith of all hypocrites or reprobates, and that true saving justifying faith, whereof we have spoken.

I. They never close with Christ Jesus in that device, and him alone as a sufficient covering of the eyes, as is said of Abraham to Sarah, Gen, 20. 16. They still hold fast some what of their own, at least to help to procure God's favour and Salvation: Their heart doth still speak, as that young man's speech, Luke 18. 18, 21. doth insinuate. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? Beside that, they do still retain their former lovers, and will not break their covenants with hell and death, imagining they may have Christ with these things equally sharing in their heart, contrary to that. A man cannot serve two masters, Mat. 6. 24. Either Christ must be judged absolute Lord, and

and worthy to be so, or nothing at all. And so it is clear, their heart is not shapen out for that Device of salvation by Christ, whom God hath alone made Lord here in whom all Fulness shall dwell. But where justifying Faith is, the soul of a Man, and his heart, doth close with Christ, and him alone, having no confidence in the flesh, Phil. 3. 3. Plal. 62. 5. He trusteth only in God. Also the man here giveth up with other lovers, as they compete with Christ, he resolves not to be for another, Hosea 3. 3. He calls him Lord, which a man can only do by the Spirit of Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 3.

II. As Hypocrites and Reprobates do never close with Christ alone; so they do never close with a full Christ, as he is anointed to be a king, to rule over a man in all things, a priest, to procure pardon, and to make peace for Man upon all Occasions, a prophet, to be Wisdom, and a Teacher and Counsellour in all Cases to Man: So they do not receive Christ, especially in the first and third office. But where true justifying Faith is, a man doth close with whole Christ in all his offices, judging all his will good, holy, just and spiritual, Rom. 7. 12, 14, and right concerning all things, Plal. 119. 128. making Mention of his Righteousness only. Plal. 71 16.

The man also giveth up himself to be taught of him, Mat. 11. 29. Learn of me. So that Christ is made to the true believer, with his own consent, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and compleat Redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30. And altho he hath not all these things formally in exercise, when his heart goeth out after Christ, yet, upon search and trial, it will be found with him, as I have said.

III. Hypocrites and Reprobates do never close with Christ, and all the Inconveniences may follow him, they stick at that with the Scribes,

Matth. 8. 19, 20. But where true justifying faith is, a man doth close with him on all hazards, he resolveth to forego all, rather then to forego Christ. We have left all, and have followed thee, Mark 10. 28. He reckoneth all to be loss and dung for the excellency of Christ Jesus, as his Lord, and to be found in him, Phil. 3. 8.

We might give other differences also, as that true faith is operative, purifying the heart, Acts 15. 9. working by love, Gal. 5. 6. whilst Hypocrites do only cleanse the Outside of the platter, Matth 23. 25. and do all to be seen of men, Matth. 6. 5. not seeking the honour that is of God only, and so cannot believe, John 5. 44. We might also shew, that true faith is never alone in a man, but attended with others saving graces: But because these things will coincide with what followeth, and here we are shewing that a man may take up his gracious state by his faith, and the acting thereof on Christ, we pass these things.

C H A P. IX.

Of the new Creature.

THE Second great mark of a gracious state, and true saving interest in Jesus Christ, is the new creature, 2 Cor 5. 17. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. This new creation, or renovation of that man is a very sensible change, although not in those who are effectually called from the womb, or in their younger years: because those have had this new creature from that time in them, so as this change in after periods of time, is not discernable, yet in those who have been regenerated & brought in to Christ, after they were come to greater age, and so have more palpably been under the power of darkness, before

before they were translated into the kingdom of Christ, Col. 1. 16. But in all who do warrantable pretend to Christ, this new creature must be, although some do not know experimentally the contraries of every part of it, so as others do, because they have not been equally, in regard of practice, under the power of darkness. This new creature is called the new man, Col. 3. 10. which doth hold out the extent of it: It is not simply a new tongue, or new hand, but a new man; There is a principle of new life and motion put in the man, which is the new heart, which new principle of life sendeth forth acts of life, or of conformity to the image of him who created it, Col. 5. 10. so as the party is renewed in some measure every way. This renovation of the man who is in Christ may be reduced into these two great heads:

First, There is a renovation of the man's person, Soul and body, in some measure. 1. His understanding is renewed, so as he judgeth Christ preached in the gospel, to be the wisdom and power of God, a wise and strong device becoming God. 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. He knoweth the things of God really and solidly, not to be yea and nay, and uncertain fancies; but all to be Yea and Amen, solid, certain, substantial things, having a desirable accomplishment in Christ and resolving much in him, 1 Cor 2. 14, 15. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual, judgeth all things. 2 Cor. 1. 18, 19, 20. As God is true, ' our word toward you was not yea and nay, ' For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was ' preached among you by us, even by me, and ' Silvanus; and Timotheus. was not yea and nay, ' but in him was yea: For all the promises of God

‘God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.’ Natural men, educated under gospel ordinances, although they have some notional knowledge of God, Christ, the promises, the motions of the holy Spirit, &c. so as they may confer, preach and dispute of these things; yet they look on them as common received maxims of christianity, from which to recede, were a singularity and disgrace, but not as real, solid, substantial truths, so as to adventure their souls and everlasting being on them. The understanding is renewed also, to take up somewhat of God in the creatures, as bearing sparks of his glorious attributes, Psal. 19. 1. They see the heavens declaring his glory and power, and somewhat of God in providence and dispensations that fall out: His wondrous works dec are that his name is near, Psal. 75. 1. The Understanding also taketh up the conditions and cases of the soul, otherwise than it was wont to do, as we find the saints usually speaking in scripture, O my Soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, Psal. 16. 2. My soul said, Thy face will I seek, Psal. 27. 8. Why art thou cast down O my soul? Psal. 42. 5: Psal. 43. 5: Return unto thy rest, O my soul, Psal. 116. 7.

II. The Heart and Affections are renewed. the heart is made a new heart, a heart of flesh, capable of impressions, having a copy of his law stamped on it, and fear of God put into it, whereby the Man’s Duty becometh, in a Manner, native and kindly to the Man. Jer. 32. 39. 40. Ezek: 36. 26. It was before a heart of stone, void of the fear of God. The affections are renewed now: The love is renewed in some good measure, it goeth out after God, I will love the Lord, Psal. 18. 1: after his law, O how love I thy law! Psal. 119. 97. after those who have God’s image in them, John 13. 35. By this shall all men know

know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another, ¶ 1 John 3. 14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. This love to God's people, is upon a pure account, as they are the children of God, and do keep his statutes, 1 Pet. 1. 22. It is with a pure heart fervently, and therefore it goeth towards all such, whom the man knoweth or apprehendeth to be such, Psal. 119. 63. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts, in all cases and conditions, even where there is nothing to beautify or commend, but the image of God: And this love is so fervent many times, 1 Pet. 1. 22. that it putteth it self out in all relations, to as a man seeketh a godly wife, a godly master, a godly servant, a godly counsellour, if he have to choole upon Psal. 101. 6. Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land: that they may dwell with me: He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. And it is not quenched by many waters, Cant. 8. 7. Many imperfections and infirmities, difference in opinion, wrongs received will not altogether quench love, altho it is communicative of good according to its measure, and as the case of the poor godly requireth, Psal. 16. 2. Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints, &c. 1 John 3. 17. 18. 19. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. The man's hatred is also renewed, and is now bended against sin, Psal. 119. 113 I hate vain thoughts against God's enemies, as such, Psal. 139. 21, 22. Do not I hate them that hate thee? &c. The joy or delight is renewed, for it runneth to-

wards

wards God, Psal. 73-25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee; towards his law and will, Psal. 1. 2. His delight is in the law of the Lord; and towards the godly and their fellowship, Psal. 16. 3. To the saints in whom is all my delight, The sorrow is turned against sin which hath wronged Christ, Zech. 12. 10. Looking to him whom they have pierced, they mourn, 2 Cor. 7. 11. The sorrow is godly there, and against what encroacheth upon God's honour, That are sorrowful for the solemn assembly and the reproach of that is their burden, Zeph. 3. 18. There is some renovation in all the affections, as in every other part of the soul pointing now towards God.

III. The very outward members of the man are renewed, as the scripture speaks, the tongue, the eye, the ear, the hand, the foot, &c. so that those members which once were improved as weapons of unrighteousness unto sin, are now improved as weapons of righteousness unto holiness, Rom. 6. 19.

Secondly, A man who is in Christ, is renewed in some measure in all his ways: Behold, all things are become new, 1 Cor. 5. 15. The man becometh new. I. In the way of his interest, He was upon any good before, tho' but apparent, and at best but external, Psal. 4. 6. Many say, who will shew us any good? But now his interest and business is, how to be found in Christ in that day, Philip. 3. 9. or, how to be forthcoming to him and (walk before him in the light of the living.) Psal. 56. 13. Which he would choose among all the mercies that fill this earth, Psal. 119. 64. The earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy: teach me thy statutes: The interest of Christ also becometh the man's interest, as appeareth in the Song of Hannah, 1 Sam. 2. and in the Song of Mary, Luke 1. It is strange to see people newly converted,

converted, and having reached but the beginnings of knowledge, concern and interest themselves in the publick matters of Christ's kingdom, so desirous to have him riding prosperously, and subduing the people under them.

II. The man that is in Christ, is renewed in the way of his worship. He was wont to serve God in the oldness of the letter, for the fashion, answering the letter of the command in the outside of duty, which one, in whom the old man hath absolute dominion, can do: But now he worshippeth God in newness of spirit. Rom, 7. 6. in a new way, wherein he is helped by the spirit of God, Rom. 8, 26. beyond the reach of flesh and blood. He (serveth now the true and living God, 1 Thess. 1. 9. in spirit and in truth,) John 4. 24. having spiritual apprehensions of God, and engaged in his very soul in that work, doing and saving truly, and not feignedly, when he worshippeth; still (desiring to approach unto him as a living God,) who heareth and seeth him, and can accept his service, Psal. 42. 1. 2, I grant, he fails of this many times; yet I may say, such worship he intendeth, and sometimes overtaketh, and doth not much reckon that worship, which is not so performed unto God; and the iniquity of his holy things, is not the least part of his burden and exercise. Such a worship natural men are strangers unto, whilst they babble out their vain glorious boastings, like the Pharisee, Luke 28, 11. 12. to an unknown God. Acts 17. 23.

III. The man that is in Christ, is renewed in the way of his outward calling, and imployment in the world; he now resolveth to be about it, because God hath commanded so, (Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Rom: 12. 11. and to eye God in it, (as the last end,) doing it to his glory. 1 Cor. 10: and studieth to keep some intercourse with God, in the exercise

cise of his outward imployments, as Jacob doth in his latter will, Gen. 49. 18. I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord, and as Nehemiah did, Neh. 2. 4: Then the king said unto me, for what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. So as the man resolveth to walk with God, and set him always before him. Plal; 16. 8. wherein, I deny nor, he faileth often.

IV. He becometh new in the way of his relations, he becometh a more dutiful husband, father, brother, master, servant, neighbour, &c. herein doth he exercise himself to keep a conscience void of offence towards man as well as towards God, Acts 24. 16. becoming all things to all men, 1 Cor. 9. 22.

V. He becometh new in the way of lawful liberties, he studieth to make use of meat, drink, sleep, recreations, apparel, with an eye to God, labouring not to come under the power of any lawful thing, 1 Cor. 6. 12. All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Nor to give offence to others in the use of these things, Rom. 14. 20. 21, For meat destroy not the work of God: All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Rom. 1. 2. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification, not using liberty as an occasion to the flesh, Gal. 5. 13. Yea, he studieth to use all these things as a stranger on earth, so as his moderation may appear, Phil 4. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men And some way he doth eye God as the last end in these things, 1 Cor. 10. 31. Doing all to the glory of God: So as we may say of that man, old things are much past away, all things are in some measure, become new,

new, 2 Cor. 5: 17. He that is so new a creature, is undoubtedly in Christ.

This renovation of a man in all manner of conversation, and this being under law to God in all things, is that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. Men may fancy things to themselves, but unless they study to approve themselves unto God in all well-pleasing and reach some inward testimony of sincerity that way, they shall not assure their hearts before him. The testimony of mens conscience is their rejoicing, 2 Cor. 1. 12. By this we know that we know him if we keep his commandments, 1 John. 2. 3. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, 1 John 4. 19. 20. 21. No confidence if the heart condemn. This is the new creature, having a principle of new spiritual life, infused by God into the heart, whereby it becometh new, and putteth forth acts of new life throughout the whole man, as we have said, so as he pointeth towards the whole law: Both towards these commands which forbid sin; so he resolveth to set against secret sins, not to lay a stumbling-block before the blind, Lev. 19. 14. Little sins which are judged so by many, the least thing of the law, Mat. 5. 19. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, & shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. Spiritual sins, filthiness of the spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Having therefore these promises (dearly beloved) let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Sins of omission, as well as of commission, since men are to be judged by these, Mat. 23. 23. 24. 25. 26. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed

curled into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink, &c. Yea, sins that are winded in into his natural humour and constitution, and to are as a right eye or hand to him, Matth. 5. 29. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, &c. This new principle of life, by the good hand of God, maketh the men set against every known sin, so far as not to allow peaceable abode to any known darkness, 2 Cor. 6. 14. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? As also he pointeth towards those commands which relate to duty, and the quickning of grace in man: It maketh a man respect all God's known commands, Psal. 119. 6. To live godly, righteously, and soberly, Titus 2. 12. Yea, and to study a right and sincere way and manner of doing things, resolving not to give over this study of conforming to God's will while he liveth on earth, but still to press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, Philip. 3. 13. 14. This is true holiness, very becoming all those who pretend to be heirs of that holy habitation, in the immediate company and fellowship of a holy God, 1 John 3. 3. We know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him.

Some may think these things high attainments and very hard to be won at. I grant it is true: But, first, Remember that there is a very large allowance in the covenant, promised to his people which maketh things more easy. The Lord hath engaged to take away the stony heart, to give a heart of flesh, a new heart, an heart to fear him for ever; He hath engaged to put his law in mens heart, to put his fear in their heart, to make them keep the law; to put his spirit in them, to cause them to keep it. He hath promised

to satisfy the priests with fatness, that the souls of the people may be satiated with his goodness, and to keep and water them continually every moment, Ez. 36. 26. Jer. 32. 39. 40. Jer. 31. 33. Ezek. 36. 27. Jer. 31. 14. Jer. 31. 12. Isa. 27. 3. And it he must be enquired to do all these things unto men, Ezek. 36. 37. He engageth to pour out the spirit of grace and supplication on them, Zech 12. 10. And so to learn them how to seek these things, and how to put him to it, to do all for them.

Secondly, For the satisfaction of the weaker, I grant this new creature, as we have circumscribed and enlarged it, will not be found, in all the degrees of it, in every gracious person. But it is well if,

I. There be a new man: We cannot grant less; if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5. 17. And that is the man, which all must put on who are savingly taught of Christ, Eph. 4. 21, 22. 23. 24. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. There must be some renewing after the image of God in a man's soul and body; there must be somewhat of every part of the man pointing towards God; although I grant every one cannot instruct this to others, neither discern it in himself, because many know not the distinct parts of the soul, nor pieces of reformation competent to every part of the soul and body; yet it will be found there is some such thing in them; yea they have a witness of it within them, if you make the thing plain and clear to them what it is.

II, There

I. There must be such a respect unto God's known commands, that a man do not allow peaceably any known iniquity to dwell in him; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2 Cor. 6. 14. 15. 16. He must not regard iniquity, Plal. 119. 6. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments. Plal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. I grant men may be ignorant of many commands, and many sins, and may imagine in some cases, that some sins are not hateful unto God; but supposing that they are instructed in these things, there can be no agreement between righteousness and unrighteousness.

III: Men must point towards all the law of God in their honest resolutions; for this is nothing else then to give up the heart unto God, to put his law in it without exception, which is a part of the covenant that we are to make with God. Heb. 8, 10. This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,---- I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts. I grant many know not how to point towards God's law in all their ways: but if it be made manifest unto them, how that should be done, they will point at it. And it is true, they will many times fail of their resolutions in their practice, yet when they have failed, they can say, They did resolve otherways, and will yet honestly, and without guile, resolve to do otherways; and it will prove their affliction to have failed of their resolution, when the Lord discovereth it to them, which he will do in due time.

IV. When we are to judge of our state by the new creature, we must do it at a convenient time, when we are in good case, at least not when

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when we are in the worst case, for the flesh and spirit do lust and fight against other, Gal. 5. 17. And sometimes the one, and sometimes the other doth prevail. Now I say, We must choose a convenient time, when the spiritual part is not by some temptation worsted and overpowered by the flesh: For in that case the new creature is recoiled back in its streams, and much returned to the fountain and the habits, except in some small things not easily discernable, whereby it maketh opposition to the flesh, according to the foresaid scripture: For now is it the time of winter in the soul, and we may not expect fruit, yea, nor leaves, as in some other season; only here, lest profane atheists should make advantage of this, we will say, that the spirit doth often prevail over the flesh in a godly man, and the scope, aim, tenor, and main drift of his way, is in the law of the Lord, that is, his walk, Plal. 119. 1. Whereas the path way, and ordinary course of the wicked, is sin, as is often hinted in the book of the proverbs of Solomon. And if it happen, that a godly man be overmastered by any transgression, ordinarily it is his sad exercise; and we suppose he keeps it still in dependency before God, to have it rectified, as David speaketh, Plal. 56. 13. Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling?

C H A P. X.

The difference betwixt a truly renewed man who is in Christ, and hypocrites.

Object. **A**THIESTS and Hypocrites may have great changes, and renovation wrought upon them, and in them, and I fear mine be such.

Ans. I grant that atheists and hypocrites have many things in them, which do look like the new

new creature. First, In regard of the parts of the man, they may. 1. Come to much knowledge, as Heb. 6. 4. They are enlightened. 2. There may be a reel amongst their affections, as, They receive the word with joy, as he that received the seed into stony places, Matth. 13. 20. 3. They may reach a great deal of outward reformation in the outward man both anent freedom from sin, and engagement to positive duty, as that Pharisee did Luke 18. 11. 12. God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. Yea 4. In regard of their practical understanding, they may judge some things of God to be excellent; the officers said, that never man spake as Christ, John 7. 46.

Secondly, Hypocrites may have a great deal of profession. 1. They may talk of the law and gospel, and of the covenant, as the wicked do, Plal. 50. 16. What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth? 2. They may confess sin openly to their own shame, as king Saul did, 1 Sam. 26. 21. 3. They may humble themselves in sackcloth with Ahab, 1 Kings 21. 27. 4. They may enquire busily after duty, and come chearfully to receive it, Isa. 58. 2. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching to God. 5. They join with God's interest in a hard and difficult time, as Demas and other hypocrites in the book of the Acts of the Apostles who afterwards fell off. 6. They may give much of their goods to God and the saints, as Ananias, Acts 5. 1. 2. If not all their goods 1 Cor. 13. 3. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

thing. Yea. 7. It is not impossible for some such, being straitly engaged in their credit, to give their bodies to be burnt, as in the last cited place.

Thirdly, Hypocrites may advance far in the common and ordinary steps of a christian work; such as the elect have when God leads them captive. As, 1. They may be under great convictions of sin as Judas was, Matth. 27. 3. 4: 5. So was king Saul often. 2. They may tremble at the word of God, and be under much terror as Felix was, Acts 24. 25. 3. They may rejoice in receiving of the truth, as he that received the seed into stony places, Matth. 13. 20. 4. They may be in some peace and quiet in expectation of salvation by Christ, as the foolish virgins were, Mat. 25. 5. All this may be backed and followed with some good measure of reformation, as the Pharisee, Luke 18. 11. 12. The unclean spirit may go out of them, Matth. 12. 43. 6. This work may seem to be confirmed by some special experience and tastings of the good word of God, Heb. 6. 4. 5.

Fourthly, Hypocrites may have some things very like the saving graces of the spirit. As, 1. They may have a sort of faith, with Simon Magus, Acts 8. 13. 2. They may have a sort of repentance and may walk mournfully. Mal. 3. 14. What profit is it, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? 3. They may have a great fear of God, such as Balzani had who, for a house full of gold, would not go with the messengers of Balak, without leave asked of God and given, Numb. 22. 18. 4. They have a sort of hope, Job 8. 13. The hypocrites hope shall perish. 5. They have some love, so had Herod to John, Mark 6. 26. I need not to insist; it is out of all question they have counterfeits of all saving graces,

Fifthly,

Fifthly. They have somewhat like the special communications of God, and the witnessing of his spirit, as somewhat like the powers of the world to come, powerfully on them, with some flashes of joy arising thence, as Heb. 6. 4. 5. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance. Notwithstanding of all which they are but almost perswaded with Agrippa to be christians, Acts 26. 28. It were tedious to speak particularly to each of these things, and to clear it up, that they are all but rotten ware: I shall condescend upon some few things, wherein a truly renewed man, who is in Christ, differs from hypocrites and reprobates.

I. Whatsoever change be in hypocrites, yet their heart is not changed and made new. The new heart is only given to the elect, when they are converted, and brought under the bond of the covenant, Jer. 32. 39. I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever. Ezek. 36. 26. A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Hypocrites did never apprehend Christ as the only satisfying good in all the world, for which wish joy they would quite all; for then the kingdom of God were entered into them, Matth. 12. 44. The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. The truly renewed man dare, and can upon solid ground, say, and hath a testimony of it from on high, that his heart hath been changed in taking up of Christ,

Christ, and hath been led out after him as the only enricheth treasure, in whom to be found, he accounting all things else Loss and Dung, Philip. 3. 8, 9.

II. Whatsoever Reformation or profession Hypocrites do attain unto: As it cometh not from a new Heart, and pure principle of zeal for God; so it is always for some wicked and By end, as to be seen of men, Matth. 6. 5. Or to evite and shun some outward strait, to be free of God's wrath and the trouble of their own conscience, Isa. 58. 3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they; and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our Soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Mal. 3. 14. What profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts? In Testimony of this, they never have respect to all known Commands, else they should never be ashamed, Psal. 119. 6. Nor do they, with out approven Guile in their own Heart, resolve against every known Iniquity, else they were freed of heart condemnings, and might justly have confidence before God, 1 John 4. 21, 22. If in never so mean a Case they did from a Principle of Love unto, and of Zeal for Christ, and for a right End, confess and profess him, Christ were obliged, by his own word, to confess them before his Father Matth. 10 32.

III. Whatsoever Length Hypocrites advance in that word, by which people are led in unto Christ, yet they never seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, Mar. 6. 33. The one thing that is necessary, viz. Christ's friendship and fellowship, is never their one thing, and heart satisfying choice, else that better part would never be taken from them. Luke 10. 42.

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enough to exclude them from the Benefit of this Mark, that they are never denied of these Things, nor emptied of them, but still do rest on them as their Saviour. so that they submit not to the Righteousness of God, Rom. 10. 3. And that is enough to keep them at a Distance from Christ, who will never clout that old Garment of Hypocrites with his fine new Linen, nor put his new Wine in these old Bottles, Matth. 9. 16, 17.

V. We may say, Let Hypocrites, Reprobates, or Athiests, have what they can, they want the three great Essentials of Religion and true Christianity. First, They are not broken in themselves, and emptied even of their Righteousness, the Length of Self-loathing, yet lying open for Relief Such lost Ones Christ came to seek and save, Luke, 19. 10. Secondly, They never took up Christ Jesus as the only Treasure and Jewel that can only enrich, and should satisfy; and therefore have never cordially agreed unto God's Device in the Covenant, and so are not worthy of him; neither hath the Kingdom of God savingly entred into their Heart, Matth. 13. 44. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Treasure hid in a Field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for Joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that Field. Thirdly. They never in Earnest do close with Christ's whole Yoke without Exception, judging all his Will just and good, holy and Spiritual, as, Rom. 7. 12. And therefore no rest allowed on them by Christ, Matth. 11. 29. Take my Yoke up n you, and ye shall find Rest unto your Soul. Therefore, whosoever thou art, who can lay clear and just Claim to these three foresaid Things, thou art beyond the reach of all Athiests, Hypocrites and Reprobates in the World, as having answered the great ends and Intentions of the law and Gospel.

Object. I am clear sometimes, I think, to lay
Claim

Claim to that Mark of the new Creature, yet at other times Sin doth so prevail over me, that I am made to question all the Work within me.

Ans. It is much to be lamented, that People professing his Name, should be so flaited and enslaved by Transgression, as many are. Yet in an Answer to the Objection, if it be seriously propounded, we say, the Saints are found in Scripture justly laying Claim unto God, and his Covenant, when Iniquity did prevail over them, as we find, Psal. 65. 3. Iniquities prevail against me: as for our Transgressions, thou shalt purge them away. Rom. 7. 23. 25. Paul thanks God through Christ, when a Law in his members led him captive unto Sin. But for the better understanding, and safe Application of such Truths, we must difference between gross Outbreakings, and ordinary Infirmities or Heart ills, or Sins that come unawares upon a man without Forethought, or any Deliberation. As for the former Sort, it is hard for a man, whilst he is under the power of them to see his gracious Change, although it be in him; and very hard to draw any comfort from it, until the man be in some measure recovered, and begin seriously to repent such Sins, and to resolve against them. We find David calling himself God's Servant, quickly after his numbring of God's People; but he was then under the serious Repentment of his Sin, 2 Sam. 24. 10. Jonah layeth Claim to God as his Master under his Rebellion; but he is then ruing it and in a Spirit of Revenge against himself for his Sin, Jonah 1. 9, 10. 12. Next as for these Sins of Infirmary, and daily Incurfion and Heart ills, such as those whereot Paul doth complain, it is like, were.

We shall draw out some Things from that seventh Chapter to the Romans, whereupon Paul maintains his Interest in Christ, and if you can apply them it is well. 1. When Paul findeth that he

doth much fail, and cannot reach Conformity to God's Laws, he doth not blame the Law, as being too strict, so as Men cannot keep it, as Hypocrites use to speak; but he doth blame himself as being carnal; and he saith of the Law, That it is good, holy & spiritual, Rom. 7. 12, 14, 2. He can say, he failed of a Good which he intended, and did outshoot himself, and he had often honestly resolved against the Evil which he fell into, Rom. 7. 15, 18, 19. 3. He saith, That the prevailing of sin, over him, is his Exercise; so as he judgeth himself wretched, because of such a Body of Death, from which he longeth to be delivered, Rom. 7. 24. 4. He saith, That whilst he is under the power and Law of Sin, there is somewhat in the Bottom of his Heart opposing it, although overmastered by it, which would be another Way, and when that gets the upper Hand, it is a delightful Thing, Rom. 7. 22, 25. Upon these Things he thanks God in Christ, that there is no Condemnation, Rom. 7. 25. Rom. 8. 1. Now then, look if you can lay Claim to these Things. 1. If you do blame yourself, and approve the Law whilst you fail. 2. If you can say, That you do often resolve against Sin honestly, and without known Guile; and do so resolve the contrary Good, before the Evil break in upon you. 3. If you can say, That you are so far exercised with your failings, as to judge yourself wretched because of such Things, and a Body of Death, which is the Root and Fountain of such Things, 4. If you can say, That there is a Party within you opposing these Evils. which would be at the right Way, and (as it were) is in its Element, when it is in God's Way, it is well; only be advised, not to take Rest, until in some good Measure, you be rid of the Ground of this Objection; or at least, until you can clearly say, You are waging War with those Things Now, a good Help against the prevailing Power of Sin, is, To cleave

cleave close to Christ Jesus by Faith, which, as it is a desireable Part of Sanctification, and a notable Piece of Conformity to God's Will, and most subservient unto his design in the Gospel. Gal. 2: 20, 21. The Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, & gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the Grace of God, And so should be much endeavoured by People, as a Work pleasing unto God, John 6, 29. This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. So it is the ready Way to draw Life and Sap from Christ the blessed Root for Fruitfulness in all Cases, as John 15. 4, 5: Abide in me, and I in you. As the Branch cannot bear Fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine: no more can ye except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the Branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

C H A P. XI,

Of the special Communications of God, and the singular gracious Operations of his Spirit.

Object. **I** DO not partake of these special communications of God, mentioned in the Scripture, and Actings and Outgoings of his Spirit, whereof gracious People often are speaking, and whereunto they attain; the want of these Things maketh me much suspect my state.

Ans. I shall shortly hint some of these excellent Communications, and I hope, upon a right Discovery of them, there will be but small Ground found for the jealous Complaints of many gracious people.

First, (Beside these Convictions of the Spirit of God, which use to usher Christ's Way unto the Souls of Men, and these also which afterwards do

do ordinarily attend them) There is a Seal of the Spirit of God spoken of in Scripture, the principal Thing whereof is the sanctifying Work of the holy Ghost, imprinting the Draughts and Lineaments of God's Image and revealed Will upon a man, as a Seal or Signet doth leave an Impression and Stamp of it's Likeness upon the thing Sealed. So it is, 2 Tim. 2. 19. The Foundation of God standeth sure, having this Seal, the Lord knoweth who are his. And let every one that nameth the Name of Christ depart from Iniquity. And thus I conceive the Seal to be called a Witness, 1 John 5. 10. He that beliveth hath the Witness in himself; That is, the grounds upon which an Interest in Christ is to be made out and proved, are in every Believer; for he hath somewhat of the sanctifying Work of God's Spirit in him, which is a sure although not always a clear and manifest Witness.

Secondly, There is Communion with God, much talked of among Christians, whereby they understand the sensible presence of God refreshing the Soul exceedingly: But if we speak properly, Communion with God is a mutual Interest between God and a man, who hath closed with him in Christ. It is a Commonness, or a common Interest between God and a man, not only is a man interested in God himself, but in all that is the Lords, so the Lord hath a special Interest in the man, and also all that belongs to him. There is a Communion between Husband and Wife, whereby they have a special Interest in others Persons, Goods, Gear and Concernments, so is it here: There is such a Communion with God, he is our God, and all Things are ours, because he is ours. This Communion with God all true Believers have at all Times, as we shall hew afterwards. I grant there is an actual Improvement of that Communion, whereby men do boldly meddle with any Thing

Thing that belongs unto God, and do meddle with himself as their own, with much Homeliness and Familiarity, especially in Worship, when the Soul doth converse with a living God, partaking of the Divine Nature, growing like unto him, and sweetly travelling through his Attributes, and with some Confidence of Interest viewing these things as the man's own Goods and Gear. This we call Communion with God in Ordinance. This indeed is not so ordinarily nor frequently made out to man, and all his People do not equally partake of it; and it is true, that what is in God, goeth not out for the Behoof of the man, to his Apprehension, equally at all times, yet certainly Communion with God, properly so called, viz. That Commonness of Interest between God and a man who is savingly in Covenant with him, doth always stand firm and sure; and so much of Communion with God in Ordinances have all Believers, as that their Heart converseth with a living God there, now and then, and is in some measure changed into that same Image, and there needeth be no Doubt about any further in it:

Thirdly: There is a Thing which is called Fellowship with God often mistaken also amongst Believers. If by Fellowship be meant the walking in our Duty, as in the sight of a living God, who seeth and heareth us and is Witness to all our Carriage: It is a Thing Common unto all gracious men, they all have it habitually, and in Design, Psal. 16. 8. I have set the Lord always before me: Yea and often they have it actually in Exercise, when their Spirit is in any good Frame; they walk as if they saw God standing by them, and have some thoughts of his Favour through Christ: Truly our Fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John 1. 3. If we, by Fellowship, do not mean a sweet, refreshing, familiar, sensible Conversing with God, which doth

light and refresh the Soul, beside what the Conscience of Duty doth; it is then a walking in the Light of his Countenance, and a good Part of sensible Presence: And although it seemeth Enoch had much of it whilst it is said, He walked with God, Gen. 5. 24. yet it is not so ordinary as the former nor so common to all Christians; for here the Soul is filled, as with marrow and fatness, following hard after it's Guide, and singularly upheld by his right hand, Plal. 63. 5, 8. My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness; and my Mouth shall praise thee with joytul Lips. My Soul followeth hard after thee: thy right Hand upholdeth me.

Fourthly, There is a Thing which is called Access unto God; and this I take to be the removing of Obstructions out of the Way, between a Man and God, so as the man is admitted to come near. We are said to have Access to a great person when Doors are cast open, Guards removed from about him, and we admitted to come close at him: so it is here. Now this Access, in Scripture, is sometimes taken for Christ's preparing of the Way, the removing of Enmity between God and Sinners, so as Men now have a patent Way to come unto God through Christ, Eph. 2. 18. For through him we both have an Access by one Spirit unto the Father. Sometimes it is taken for the actual improvement of that Access purchased by Christ, when a Man finds all Obstructions and Differences which do ordinarily fall in between him and God, removed: God is not uncouth to him, nor as a stranger, keeping up himself from him, or, frowning on him, but the Man is admitted to come even to his Seat, as Job, 23. 3. Of the want of this doth Job complain, Job, 22. 8, 9. Whilst he saith, I go forward, backward, to the right and left Hand, and I find him not. The first Sort of Access is common to all believers; they are brought near by the Blood of the Covenant, and are no more far off.

off, as the deadly enmity between God and them is removed. But Accels in the other Sense, is dispensed more according to the Lord's absolute Sovereignty and pleasure, and it is left in the power of Believers to obstruct it unto themselves, until it please the Lord, mercifully and freely, to grant it unto them again; so it is up and down, and there needs be no Question. as to a Man's State, about it.

Fifthly, There is a Thing called Liberty before God, and this properly is Freedom, or free speaking unto God. Many do much question their State, because of the want of this now and then; since the Scripture hath said, Where the Spirit is, there is Liberty, 2 Cor. 3. 17. But they do unjustly confine that Liberty spoken of there, unto this free speaking before God. I grant where the Spirit of the Lord doth savingly discover God's will in the Scripture to a Man, there is Liberty from any obligation to the Ceremonial Law, and from the condemning Power of the Moral Law, and from much of that gross Darkness and Ignorance which is on natural Hearts, as a Vail hiding Christ in the Gospel from them. I grant also, that sometimes, even this Liberty which is a free Communing with God, and ordering of our cause before him, and filling of our mouth with Arguments, Job, 23. 4. is granted to the Godly, but not as Liberty taken in the former Senses. Although the Lord hath obliged himself to pour out the Spirit of Prayer upon all the House of David in some Measure, Zech. 12. 10. Yet this Communication of the Spirit, which we call Liberty, or free speaking unto God, dependeth much on the Lord's absolute Pleasure, when, and in what Measure, to allow it. This Liberty which we call Freedom, or free Speaking with God in Prayer, is sometimes much abstracted from any great Confidence in the Time of Prayer, at least, untill it draw towards the Close of it; it standeth much

in a Vivacity of the Understanding, to take up the Case which a Man is to speak before God, so as he can order his Cause: And next, there be Words, or verbal Expressions, elegant, suitable, and very emphatical, or powerful and pithy. There is also joyned a Fervency of Spirit in Prayer, whereof the Scripture speaketh: the Soul is hot and bended, and very intent.

There is also ordinarily in this Liberty, a special Molting of the Heart, often joined with a great Measure of the Spirit of Grace and Supplication. Zech, 12. 10. So the Soul is poured out before God, as for a First born. Such is the Liberty which many Saints get before God, whilst in much Brokenness of Heart, and Fervency of Spirit, they are admitted to speak their mind fully to God, as a living God, noticing (at least) their Prayer. Sometimes this Liberty is joined with Confidence, and then it is, not only a free, but also a bold Speaking before God. It is that Boldness with Confidence, Eph. 3. 12. In whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him. This is more rarely imparted unto men, than the former, yet it is ordinary: It hath in it, beside what we spake before, some Influence of the Spirit upon Faith, making it put out some vigorous Acting in Prayer. There is a sweet mournful Frame of Spirit, by which a man poureth out his Heart in God's bosom, and with some Confidence of his Favour and good will, pleadeth his cause before him, as a living God, and this is all the sensible presence that many Saints do attain unto. There is no Ground of Doubt anent a man's State, in the Point of Liberty before God, in this last Sense, because, there is nothing essential to the making up of a gracious State here: Some have it, some want it, some have it at some Times, and not at other Times, so that it is much up and down; yet I may say Gracious Men may do much, by a very ordinary Influence,

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contributing towards the attaining and retaining, or keeping of such a Frame of Spirit:

Sixthly, There is a Thing called Influence, or Breathing of the Spirit. This gracious Influence, for of such only do I now speak, is either ordinary, and this is the Operations of the holy Spirit on the Soul, and the Habits of Grace there, whereby they are still kept alive, and in some Exercise and Acting, although not very discernable. This Influence, I conceive, doth always attend Believers, and is that keeping and watering Night and Day, and every Moment, promised, Isa. 27. 3: Or, this Influence is more singular and special, and is that same to a gracious although a withered Soul, as the Wind and Breath to the dry Bones, putting them in good Case, Ezek. 37. 9, 10. And as the Dew or Rain to the Grass, or newly mown Field, and parched Ground, Psal. 72. 6. Such Influence is meant, Cant. 4: 16. by the blowing of the South Wind, making the Spices to flow out. When the Spirit moveth thus, there is an Edge put upon the Graces of God in the Soul and they are made to act more vigorously. This is the enlarging of the Heart, by which a man doth run in the ways of God, Psal. 119, 32. This Influence is more discernable than the former, and not so ordinarily communicated. Also here, sometimes the Wind bloweth more upon one Grace, and sometimes more discernably upon another, and often upon many of the Graces together; and according to lesser or greater Measure of this Influence, the Soul acteth more or less vigourously towards God: And since Faith is a created Grace in the Soul, the Influence of the Spirit is upon it, sometimes less sometimes more and accordingly is the Assurance of Faith small, or great.

Seventhly, There is the hearing of Prayer, often spoken of in Scripture; and many vex themselves about it, alledging that they know nothing of it

it experimentally. I grant there is a favourable hearing of Prayer ; but we must remember it is Twofold : Either, First, It is such as man is simply to believe, by Way of Argument, on scriptural Grounds ; as, If I be fled unto Christ, and do approach unto God in him, pray according to his will, not regarding Iniquity in my Heart, exercising Faith about the Thing I pray for, absolutely or conditionally, according to the Nature of the thing, and Promises anent it : I am obliged to believe that God heareth my Prayer, and will give what is good, according to these Scriptures, John 14. 13, 14. Whatsoever ye ask in my Name, I will do it, 1 John 5. 14. This is our Confidence, that whatsoever we ask according to his Will, he heareth us. Mark 11. 24. Believe that ye receive, and ye shall have what ye desire, Psal. 66. 18. If I regard Iniquity in my Heart, the Lord will not hear. Then if I regard not Iniquity, I may believe that he doth hear me. Or, Secondly, A Man doth sensibly perceive that God heareth his Prayer it is made out to his Heart, without any syllogistical Deduction. Such a hearing of Prayer got Hannah 1 Sam. 2. 18. Her Countenance was no more sad. Surely the Lord did breath upon her Faith, and made her believe that she was heard : She could not make it out by any Argument : for she had not Grounds whereupon to build the Premises of the Argument, according to Scripture, in that particular : God did stamp it some Way upon her Heart sensibly, and so made her believe it. This is but rarely granted, especially in Cases clearly deducible in Scripture ; therefore People are much to be satisfied in exercising their Faith about the other, and ought to leave it to God to give of this latter what he pleaseth. A Man's gracious State should not be brought upon Debate, upon the account of such hearing of Prayer.

Eightly, There is Assurance of God's Favour by,

by the Witnessing of our own Spirits, which Assurance is deduced by Way of Argument syllogistically thus: Whosoever believeth on Christ shall never perish: But I do believe on Christ, therefore, I shall never perish. Whoso hath Respect unto all God's Commandments, shall never be ashamed; But I have Respect unto all his Commands; therefore, I shall never be ashamed. I say, by reasoning thus, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual things, a Man may attain unto a good Certainty of his gracious State. It is supposed, 1 John 3. 18, 19. that by loving the Brethren in Deed and in Truth, we may assure our Hearts before God, and that a man may rejoice upon the testimony of a good conscience 2 Cor. 1. 12. A Man may have Confidence towards God, if his Heart do not condemn him, 1 John 3. 21 we may then attain unto some Assurance, although not full Assurance, by the Witness of our own Spirits. I do not deny, that in this Witnessing of our Spirits towards Assurance, there is some Concurrence of the Spirit of God: But I conceive, there needeth but a very ordinary Influence, without which we can do nothing. Now this Assurance, such as it is may be reached by intelligent Believers, who keep a good Conscience in their Walk. So I hope, there needs be no debate about it, as to a Man's gracious State; for, if it a Man will clear himself of Heart condemnings, he will speedily reach this Assurance.

Ninthly. There is a Witnessing of God's a Spirit, mentioned, Rom. 8. 16. bearing Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God. This Operation of the Spirit is best understood, if we produce any Syllogism, by Which our Spirit doth witness our Sonship; as for Example, Whosoever loveth the Brethren, is past from Death to Life, and consequently is in Christ: But I love the Brethren; therefore, I am passed from Death to Life, Here there is a Threefold Operation of the Spirit

or

or three Operations rather : The first is a Beam of divine Light, upon the first proposition, perswading the divine Authority of it, as the Word of God. The Spirit of the Lord must Witness the Divinity of the Scripture, and that it is the infallible Word of God, far beyond all other Arguments that can be used for it. The second Operation, is a glorious Beam of Light from the Spirit, shining upon the second proposition, and so upon his own Graces in the Soul, discovering them to be true Graces, and such as the Scripture calleth so. Thus we are said to know by his Spirit, the things that are freely given unto us of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12. The third Operation, is in Order to the third proposition of the Argument or the Conclusion, and this I conceive to be nothing else but an Influence upon Faith, strengthening it do draw a Conclusion of full Assurance, upon the foresaid Premises.

NOW. (with Submission unto others who have greater Light in the Scripture, and more Experience of these precious Communications) I do conceive the Witness of the Spirit, or Witnessing of it, which is mentioned, Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, is not that first Operation upon the first proposition : for that Operation is that Testimony of the Spirit, by which he beareth Witness to the Divinity of the whole Scripture, and asserteth the divine Authority of it unto the Souls of gracious men. And such an Operation may be upon a Truth of Scripture which doth not relate to a man's Sonship, or Interest in Christ, at all. The Spirit may so shine upon any Truth, relating to Duty, or any other fundamental Truth, perswading the Divinity of it, upon and unto the Soul, and speak nothing relating to a man's Interest in Christ. Neither is the third Operation of the Spirit by which he makes Faith boldly draw the Conclusion, this Witnessing of the Spirit ; for that

that Operation is nothing else but an Influence upon Faith, bringing it out to full Assurance. But that whereupon this full Assurance is drawn, or put out, is somewhat deposed and Witnessed already: Therefore I conceive the second Operation of the Spirit upon the second proposition, and so upon the Graces, in the man, is that Witness of God's Spirit, that Beam of divine Light shining upon those Graces, whereby they are made very conspicuous to the Understanding: That is the Witness, the shining so on them is his Witnessing; for only here, in this proposition, and in this Operation, doth the Spirit of God prove a Witness with our Spirit; for the main thing wherein the Witness of our Spirit lieth, is in the second proposition; and so the Spirit of God witnessing with our Spirit, is also in that same proposition: So these two Witnesses having deposed and Witnessed one and the same thing, viz. The Truth and Reality of such and such Graces in the man, which our own Spirit or Conscience doth depose, according to it's Knowledge, and the Spirit of the Lord doth certainly affirm and Witness to be so; there is a Sentence drawn forth, and a conclusion the man's Sonship, by the man's Faith, breathed upon by the Spirit for that Effect: And this conclusion beareth the full assurance of a man's Sonship. It may be presumed, that some true saints do not partake of this all their Days, as Heb. 2. 15. And deliver them who, through fear of Death were all their Life time subject to Bondage.

Tenthly. I speak with the Experience of many Saints, and I hope, according to Scripture, if I say there is a communication of the Spirit of God, which is let out to some of his People sometimes, that is somewhat beside, if not beyond that Witnessing of a Sonship spoken of before, It is a glorious divine Manifestation of God unto the Soul, shedding abroad God's Love in the Heart. it is a
Thing

Thing better felt than spoken of. It is no audible Voice, but it is a Waff of Glory filling the Soul with God, as he is Life, Light, Love and Liberty, countervailing that audible Voice; O Man, greatly beloved, Dan: 10. 1. 9. Putting a Man in a Transport with this on his Heart, It is good to be here, as Matth. 17. 4. It is that which went out from Christ to Mary, when he but mentioned her Name, John 20. 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary; She turned her self, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. He had spoken some Words to her before, and she understood not that it was He: But when he uttereth this one Word, MARY, there was some amiable divine Conveyance and Manifestation made out unto her Heart, by which she was so satisfyingly filled, that there was no Place for arguing and disputing, Whether or no that was Christ, and if she had any Interest in him. This manifestation made Faith to it self; and did purchase Credit and Trust to it self, and was equivalent with, Thus saith the Lord. This is such a glance of glory, that it may, in the highest Sense, be called the Earnest, or First, fruits of the Inheritance; Eph. 1. 14. For it is a felt Armsful of the holy God, almost wholly conforming the man into his likeness so swallowing him up, that he forgetteth all Things except the present manifestation. O how glorious is this manifestation of the Spirit! Faith here riseth to so full an Assurance, that it resolveth wholly in to sensible Embracements of God. This is the thing which doth best deserve the Title of sensible Presence; and it is like, is not given unto all Believers, some whereof are all their Days under Bondage, and in Fear, Heb. 2. 15. But here Love, almost perfect casteth out Fear, 1 John 4. 18. This is so absolutely let out upon the Masters Pleasure, and so transient, and passing, or quickly gone when it is, that no man may bring his gracious state upon Debate for want of it.

Eleventhly,

Eleventhly, There is a Thing we call Peace about which many do vex themselves, This Peace is either anent a Man's State, that he is reconciled unto God by Jesus Christ; or it is anent his present Case and Condition, that he is walking so as approven of God at least, so far as there is no Quarrel or Controversy between God and him, threatening a Stroke. Both of these are either such in the Court of Scripture, and consequently in God's Account; or in the Court of a Man's own Conscience. Peace anent a Man's State, as being in Christ, is sure in the Court of Scripture and of Heaven when a man doth, by Faith Close with Christ and the new Covenant, Rom. 5. 1. Being justified by Faith, we have peace with God. It being sure and solid in the Court of Scripture, it should hold sure in the Court of a Man's Conscience, it being rightly informed; for, in that Case, it still speaks according to Scripture: But, because often the Conscience is misinformed, and in the Dark; therefore there is often peace anent a Man's State, according to Scripture: whilst his Conscience doth threaten the Contrary, and doth still condemn, and refuseth to assail the man, as being reconciled unto God through Christ. In this Case, the Conscience must be informed, and man's gracious State made out by the marks of Grace, as we shewed before; and here the Witness of my own Spirit, will do much to allay the Cry of the Conscience, and if the Spirit of the Lord join his Witness and Testimony, the Conscience is perfectly satisfied, and proclaimeth Peace to the man.

The other Peace, anent a man's present Case or Condition, viz. That it is approven of God in a Gospel Sense, it may be wanting, and justly wanting, although the Peace anent a man's State be sure. This Peace anent a man's Case and Condition, is either such in the Court of Scripture, and this is when a man is not regarding Iniquity, and

and respecting the Commands of God without Exception, then the Scripture saith, He stands in an even Place, and he needeth fear no stated Quarrel between God and him, in order to a temporary stroke; and when it is thus, his Conscience should also assail him in that same way, and would do so, if it were rightly informed. But because the Conscience is often in the Dark, therefore a man may be alarm'd with Evil in the Court of Conscience as if he were justly to expect a stroke from God because of his Sin, and some Quarrel God hath at him, although he intend Salvation for him. This is enough to keep a man in Disquiet, and to inhibit him the Rejoicing allowed unto him, whilst he is walking in his Integrity. Therefore a man must here also inform his Conscience, and receive no Accusations nor Condemnings from it, unless it make them clear by Scripture. At that Bar let every man stand, both anent his State, and his Condition or case; and let him appeal from all other Courts to thar, and not receive any Indictment, but conform to the Truth of God, by which the Conscience is to proceed in all Things. And if this were well looked unto, there would not be so many groundless Suspicions amongst the Lord's People, either anent their State, or their Condition, upon every thought: which entreteth their mind.

Twelfthly, There is the Joy of the holy Ghost, and this is when the Spirit doth breathe upon our Rejoycing in God (which is a Grace very little in Exercise with many) and maketh it set out sensibly and vigorously; and he exciteth and stirreth the Passion of Joy, and Delight in the Soul, so as there is an unspeakable and glorious Joy, in the Soul, in the Apprehension of God's Friendship, and Nearness unto him, 1 Peter 1. 8. In whom though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoyce with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.

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This Joy followeth upon peace and Peace followeth Righteousness, Rom. 14. 17. The Kingdom of God---is Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the holy Ghost. This Joy readily will not fail to be according to the Measure of the Assurance of Faith, as 1 Pet. 1. 8. In whom believing, ye rejoyce, so that the Removal of mistakes about other things, will allay Doubts anent this.

Now, because some of these excellent Communications of the Spirit, after they are gone, are brought in Question as Delusions of Satan; for vindication of them, we say, that the special Operations of God's Spirit in any high Degree, usually are communicated to People after such Brokenness of Spirit, Psal. 51. 8. Make me to hear Joy and Gladness; that the Bones which thou hast broken, may rejoyce. After so singular Pains in religious Duty, Dan. 9. 3, 20. And I set my Face unto the Lord God, to seek by Prayer and Supplications, with fasting, and Sackcloth, and Ashes and whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my Sins,--The man Gabriel whom I had seen in the Vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me, or in time of such suffering for Righteousness 1 Pet. 4. 13, 14. Rejoice, in as much as ye are Partakers of Christ's Sufferings: that when his Glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon you, Or if they break in as the Rain that waiteth not for man, then they do so humble and abase the Person, Isa. 6. 5. Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean Lips, for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts. And there are found so many Evidences of Grace in the man, Rom. 8, 16. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God, or these things do so provoke unto Holiness, and to have every thing answerable and conform

form unto these Manifestations of God, 2 Tim. 2. 19. Let every one that nameth the Name of Christ, depart from Iniquity. The Persons under them doth so loath all things beside God's Friendship and Fellowship, Matth. 17. 4. Peter said unto Jesus, Lord it is good for us to be here. And these Things do carry on them, and with them, so much Authority and divine Supercription, whilst they are in the soul, that afterwards they may appear sufficiently to be special Communications of God, and singular gracious Operations of his Spirit, and no Delusion of Satan transforming himself into an angel of Light, 2 Cor. 11. 14. Nor such common Flashes of the Spirit, as may admit afterwards irrecoverable apostacy from God, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. For it is impossible for these who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the holy ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the Power of the World to come; If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto Repentance.

Now then, to conclude this Part of the Work that relateth unto trial; I say to all these who complain of the want of the precious Out letting of the Spirit. First, Bless God if you want nothing essential for making out of a saving Interest in Christ. God hath given unto you Christ Jesus, the greatest Gift he had, and since your Hearts shapen out for him, he will, with him give you all Things that are good for you in their Season. 2dly, I do believe, upon a right Search and Trial, after you have understood the Communications of the Spirit, you are not so great a Stranger to many Things, as you did suspect your self to be. But, 3dly, Remember the promises of Life, and of Peace with God are no where, in Scripture, made unto these special Things, whereof you alledge the want. The promises are made unto Faith, followed with Holiness; and it may be presumed, that many
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Heirs of Glory do not, in this Life, partake of some of these Things, but are in Bondage all their Days, through Fear of Death, Heb. 2. 15. So that there should be no Mistake about these Things; we may seek after them, but God is free to give or withhold them. 4thly, Many do seek after such Manifestations before they give Credit by Faith unto God's Word: He hath born Record, that there is Life enough for Men in Christ Jesus, and if Men would, by believing, set to their Seal, that God is true, they should partake of more of these excellent Things. 5thly, I may say, Many have not honourable Apprehensions & Thoughts of the Spirit of God, whose proper Work it is to put out the forsaide noble Operations. They do not adore him as God, but vex, grieve, quench, and resist him: and many People complaining of the want of these Things, are not at the Pains to seek the Spirit in his Outgoings, and few do set themselves apart for such precious Receipts: Therefore be at more Pains in Religion, give more Credit to his Word, and esteem more highly of the Spirit of God, and so you may find more of these excellent Things.

PART II.

How to attain unto

a saving Interest in CHRIST.

HAVING, in the former Part of this Treatise put every Man's State to trial, it now remains, that in this following Part, we give Advice to those, who neither can, nor dare lay Claim to the marks formerly mentioned.

Quest.

What shall they do who want the Marks of a true and saving Interest in Christ, already spoken of, and neither can dare pretend unto them?

Ans^r. If men miss in themselves, the Marks of a saving Interest in Christ, spoken of before, then it is their Duty, and of all that hear this Gospel, personally and heartily to close with God's Device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, and this shall secure their state.

C H A P. I.

Some Things premised for the Information of those who are more ignorant.

FOR the better understanding of this, we shall premise some Things for Information of those who are more ignorant, and then speak more directly to the Thing. As for the Things to be premised.

I. The Lord did, at the beginning out of his Bounty, make a Covenant with man in Adam, Gen. 2. 16, 17. And did enable man to abide in that Covenant, Eccl. 7. 19. God hath made man upright. But man, by eating of that forbidden Fruit, Gen. 3. Did break that Covenant, Hos. 6. 7. They, like Adam have transgressed the Covenant, and made it void for ever, Rom. 3. 20. By the Deeds of the Law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, and involved himself into all misery thereby, Rom. 5. 12. As by one man sin, entred into the World, and Death by sin, and so Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

II. The Lord did, most freely, from everlasting purpose and intend to save men another Way viz. by Christ Jesus, and the Covenant of Grace, in which he intended Reconciliation with the Elect through Christ Jesus, God and man, born of a Woman,

Woman, in due Time, to make this Agreement effectual. And this Device of satisfying his own Justice, and saving of the Elect by Christ, he did at first intimate, to our Parents in Paradise, Gen. 3. 15. Where he saith, That the seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's Head. And the Lord hath in all Generations, made this known to his Church.

III. The Lord hath in all ages covenanted to be the reconciled God of all these, who by their subjection to his Ordinances, did profess their satisfaction with this Device, and oblige themselves to acquiesce in the same, and to seek salvation by Christ Jesus, as God doth offer him in the Gospel; so all the People of Israel are called the Lord's People, and are said to avouch him to be their God, and he doth avouch them to be his People, Exod 19. 5, 8. Deut: 26 17, 18. Yea, the Lord doth also engage himself to be the God of the Seed and Children of those who do subject to his Ordinance. The Covenant is said to be made between God and all the People, young and old, present, and not present that Day, Deut. 29 10, 11, ---15. And all are appointed to come under some Seal of that Covenant as was enjoined to Abraham, Gen. 17. 10. Not only was it so in the Old Testament, but it is so in the New Testament also, The Lord makes offer of himself to be our God in Christ Jesus; and the People professing their Satisfaction in that Offer, and in Testimony thereof, subjecting themselves unto the Ordinances, they are reckoned a covenanted People, and are joined unto his Church in thousands, receiving a Seal of the Covenant without any further particular previous Trial, Acts 2: 38, 42. Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sin---Then they that gladly received his Word, were baptized: and the same Day

Day there were added unto them about three Thousand Souls.

IV. Many do deal treacherously with God in this Covenant, *Plal.* 78. 36, 37. Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their Tongue. For their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant. And although they profess their Estimation of Christ the Saviour, and their Heart satisfaction with that Device of saving Sinners by him and having the Image of God restored by him in them; yet their Heart is not right with God, and they do content themselves with an empty Title, of being in a sealed Covenant with God, *John* 8. 39. Abraham is our Father, say they, for although the Lord obligeth every Man, who professeth his Satisfaction with Christ Jesus, the devised Ransom, to be cordial and sincere herein; and only to these who are so, doth he make out the Spiritual Promises of the Covenant, they only being privileged to be the Sons of God, who really receive Christ, *John* 1. 21. Yet the Lord doth permit many to profess their closing with him in Christ, both in the Old and New Testament, whilst their Heart is not engaged; and he doth admit them to be Members of his Church, granting unto them the Use of Ordinances, and many other external Mercies and Priviledges denied unto the Heathen, who are not in Covenant with him.

V. Although the great Part of People do foolishly fancy, that they have closed with God in Christ Jesus sincerely and heartily: or, at least, they do without any Ground or warrant, promise a new Heart to themselves, before they depart this Life; yet there be but very few who do really and cordially close with God in Christ Jesus as he is offered in the Gospel, and so there be but very few saved, as is clear, *Matt.* 7. 14.

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VI. Although none at all do cordially close with God in Christ Jesus, and acquiesce in that ransom sound out by God, except only such as are elected, Rom. 11. 7. But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. And whose hearts the Lord doth sovereignly determine to that blessed choice, John 6. 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Yee the Lord hath left it as a duty upon People, who hear this gospel, to close with his offer of salvation through Christ Jesus, as if it were in their power to do it: And the Lord, through these commands and exhortations, wherein he obligeth men to the things, doth convey life and strength to the elect, and doth therein convey the new heart unto them, which pointeth kindly towards this new device of saving sinners, and towards Christ in his covenant relations; or, it is the Lord's mind in these commands and invitations, to put People on some duty, with which he useth to concure for accomplishing that business between him and them: So then, it is a coming on our part, and yet a drawing on his part, John 6. 44. It is a drawing on his part, and a running on our part, Cant. 1. 1. It is an approaching on our part, and yet a choosing, and causing to approach on his part, Psal. 65 4. It is a believing or receiving, on our part, John 1. 12. And yet it is given us to believe, Phil. 1. 29.

C H A P. II.

WHat it is to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, and that it is a necessary duty.

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C H A P. II.

WHat it is to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, and that it is a necessary duty.

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H A V I N G

HAVING premised these things, I say if men miss in themselves the Marks of a saving Interest in Christ, spoken of in the former part of the Treatise; then, for securing their state, they are obliged, with all diligence, personally and heartily to accept of, and close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus held out in the Gospel.

In handling of this, we shall, first, Shew what it is to accept of and, close with that noble invention. 2dly, We shall shew that it is the necessary duty of those who would be in favour with God, and secure their souls. 3dly, What is previously required of those who perform this duty. 4thly, What are the qualifications and properties of this duty, if rightly managed. 5thly, What be the native Consequences of it, if it be performed aright.

As for the first, What it is to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, held out in the gospel: Here we must remember, as we shewed before, that at first God willed man to abide in his Favour, by holding fast his first integrity in which he was created; but man, by his transgression, lost God's Favour, made void that covenant of Works, and put himself in an utter Incapacity to regain the Lord's Friendship which he had lost by his Sin, and to rescue himself from the Curse and Wrath now due to him for the same, or any way to procure his own Salvation: But the Lord freely hath manifested another way of repairing man's lost estate, viz. by sending his Son Christ Jesus in the flesh to satisfy his justice for the sins of the elect, and to restore in them his Image now defaced, and to bring them unto Glory; and he hath made open proclamation in the Church, that whosoever will lay aside all thoughts of saving themselves by the covenant of Works

Works, or inherent righteousness. and will agree heartily to be saved by Christ Jesus, they shall be restored to a better condition than formerly man was in, and shall be saved. So then, to close with God's device of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, is to quit and forego all thoughts of help or Salvation by our own righteousness, and to agree unto this way which God hath found out; it is to value and highly esteem of Christ Jesus, as the treasure sufficient to enrich poor man, and with the heart to believe this Record, that there is Life enough in him for men, it is to please this Invention, and to acquiesce in, as the only way to true happiness, it is to point towards this Mediator, as God holdeth him out in the gospel, with desire to lay the stress of our whole state on him. This is that which is called Faith, or believing, the receiving of Christ, or believing on his name, John 1. 12, This is that believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, commanded unto the Jaylor for his safety. Acts 16. 31. This agreeth to all the descriptions of justifying Faith in the scripture. This doth answer the type of looking to the brazen serpent, lifted up in the wilderness, John 3. 14 15. And this is supposed in all these ordinary actings of faith, to which promises are annexed in the scripture, and will be found in all who have got the new heart from God and it will be found in none else.

As to the second thing, viz. That this is the necessary duty of all such who would be in favour with God, and secure their souls: It appeareth thus.

1. This closing with God's device, or believing in Christ, is commanded every where in Scripture, by the Lord, as the condition of the new covenant, giving title and right unto all the spiritual blessings of the same, for it is, upon the matter, the receiving of Christ: This is commanded, whilst God bids men come and buy, that is, impropria-

all, by closing with that device, Ita. 55. 1. The weary are commanded to come unto him thus, for their rest, Mat. 11. 18. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ, 1 John 3. 23. This is enough to prove it a duty incumbent. But further, it is such a duty, as only giveth title and right to a sonship; for, only they who receive him, are priviledged to be sons, John 1. 12. But as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to to them that believe on his name.

II. It appeareth to be the necessary duty of all, thus, no less than this doth give a meeting unto God, offering himself to be our God in Christ; and no less than this doth answer our profession, as we are in covenant with him, as members of his visible church. The Lord offereth to be our God in Christ; If we do not close with the offer, laying aside all thoughts of other ways by which we may attain to happiness, we give no meeting to him. He saith, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him, Mat. 17. 5. If we close not with the offer, we give no answer unto God. Moreover, we are all baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, Acts 2. 38. Now, unless we close with Christ, as said is, we falsify that profession; therefore, since this is the thing which doth answer God's offer in the gospel, and maketh good our profession as members of his church, it is a necessary duty lying upon us.

III. Whatsoever a man hath else, if he do not thus close with God's device anent Christ Jesus, and do not receive him, it doth not avail, either as to the accepting of his person, or of his performance, or as to the saving of his soul, men are accepted only in Christ the beloved, Eph. 1. 6. Abel and his offering are accepted by faith, H. b. 11. 4. Without faith it is impossible to please God, Hebr.

12. 6. And he that believeth not, is condemned already, and shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him, John 3, 18, 36. For want of this^a no external title doth avail: The children of the kingdom are cast out, if this be wanting, Mat. 8: 10, 11, 12. The people of Israel are like other heathens, in regard of a graceless state, lying open to the wrath of God. Jer. 9. 25, 26. Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom.--- for all these nations are uncircumcised, and all the House of Israel are uncircumcised, in the heart. If men do not believe that he who was slain at Jerusalem, who was called Christ Jesus, and witnessed unto by the prophets, and declared to be the Son of God by mighty works; I say, If men do not believe that he is the way, and close not with him as the only way, they shall die in their sins, John 8. 23. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

We say then, it is a most necessary duty, thus to close with Christ Jesus, as the blessed relief appointed for sinners. Every one who is come to years of understanding, and heareth this gospel, is obliged to take to heart his own lost condition, and God's gracious offer of peace and Salvation through Christ Jesus; and speedily to flee from the wrath to come, by accepting and closing with the offer, and heartily acquiescing therein, as a satisfying way for saving of poor sinners. And, that all may be the more encouraged to set about this duty, when they hear him praying them to be reconciled unto him, let them remember, that peace and Salvation is offered to the people in universal terms, to all without exception: If any man will, he shall be welcome, Rev. 22. 17. If any

Christ, although after that which will never profit, yet they shall be welcome here, on the condition foresaid, Isa. 55. 2, 3. All are commanded to believe, 1 John, 3. 23. This is his commandment that we should believe on the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. The promises are to all who are externally called by the gospel, God excludes none, if any do not exclude themselves, Acts 2. 39. The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. So that if any have a mind for the thing they may come forward, he will in no wise cast them out, John, 6. 37. being able to save to the utmost, them who come to God through him, Heb. 7. 25. And these who have long delayed to take this matter to heart, had now the more need to look to it, lest what belongs to their peace, be hid from their eyes, But all these Words will not take effect with people, until God pour out his Spirit from on high, Isa. 32. 15. to cause men approach unto God in Christ; yet we must still press men's duty upon them, and obtest and charge them by the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ and their reckoning to him in that day, that they give the Lord no rest, until he send out that Spirit, which he will give to them who ask it, Luke 11. 13. and cause them to know what belongs unto their peace, and bring them up to their duty.

C H A P. III.

What is previously required of those that would believe on Jesus Christ,

WE come now to speak of the third thing, viz. What is previously required of these who are to perform this duty. Men must not rashly, inconsiderately, and ignorantly rush in upon

upon this matter saying. They please that device of saving sinners by Christ, and will acquiesce and rest on him for safety: Often men do deceive themselves here, and do imagine that they have done the thing, we shall therefore hold out some things pre-required in a person who is to close with Christ Jesus; which although we offer not as positive qualifications fitting a man for Christ this way. *Ila. 55. 1.* Come---without money, and without price; Yet they are such things, as without them, a man cannot knowingly and cordially perform the duty of believing on Christ Jesus.

Beside the common principles which are to be supposed in those who live under gospel ordinances, as the knowledge that men have immortal souls; that soul and body will be united again at the last day; that there is a heaven and hell, one of which will be the everlasting lot of all men; that the old and new testament is the true word of God, and the rule of faith and manners; that every man is by nature void of the grace of God, and is an enemy unto God, and an heir of condemnation; that reconciliation is only by the mediator Christ Jesus; that faith unites unto him, and is the condition of the new covenant; that holiness in the Fruit of true faith, and is to be studied as that without which no man shall see God: I say, beside these things, the knowledge of which is necessary, it is required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus, first That he take to heart his natural condition: and here he must know some things, and also be very serious about them: I say, he must know some things, as.

1. That as he was born a rebel and outlaw unto God, so he hath, by many actual transgressions, disobliged God and ratified the forfeiture of his favour, yea, a man should know many par-

ticular instances of his rebellion on all hands; as that he is a liar, sabbath breaker, blasphemers, or the like, as Paul speaketh very particularly of himself afterwards, 1 Tim. 13.

II. The man must know, that the wrath of God denounced in scripture, is standing in force against those very sins whereof he is guilty, and so consequently he is the party undoubtedly against whom God, who cannot lie, hath denounced war. A man must know, that when the scripture saith, Cursed is he that offereth a corrupt thing unto God, Mal. 1. 14. It speaketh against him for his superficial service performed unto God with the outward man, when his heart is far off. When the word saith, the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain, Exod. 20. 7. The man must know, it speaketh against himself, who hath often carelessly profaned that dreadful name, before which all knees should bow, Phil. 2. 10. And which his enemies do take in vain, Plal. 139. 20. When the word saith, Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently, Jer. 48. 10. The man must know that it speaks against himself, who hath irreverently with much wandring of heart, and drowsiness, heard the word preached; and without sense, faith or understanding, hath often prayed before him. When the word saith, wo be unto him that giveth his neighbour drink and putteth his bottle to him, to make him drunk also, that he may look on his nakedness, Hab. 2. 15, 16. The man must know, that it is spoken against himself, who hath gloried in making his neighbour drunk, and that dreadful wrath is determined by the Lord against him; according to that scripture, when the word saith, God will judge unclean persons, Heb. 13. 4. And will close them out of the new Jerusalem, and they shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. 21. 8. The man must know, that the scripture speaketh these very words

words against him, he being an unclean person; so that he is the person against whom the curses of the law do directly strike.

III. A man must know, that he hath nothing of his own to procure his peace, and to set him free of the hazard under which he lieth, because all his righteousness is as an unclean thing, Isa. 64. 6. His prayers, his other service done to God, his alms deeds, &c. are not pass guilt before God, since they came not from a right principle in his heart, and were not performed in a right way, nor upon a right account, nor for a right end: His sacrifices have been an abomination unto God, Prov. 21. 27.

IV. He must know, that as he is void of all the saving graces of the Spirit, as the true love of God, the true fear of his name, godly sorrow for sin, &c. so particularly, that he wants faith in Christ, who taketh burden for all them who believe on him. Until a man know this, he will still leave all his debt and burden, without care or regard, any where else, before he bring it to the common cautioner.

NOW, not only must a man know these things as I said before, but must also very seriously take them to heart, that is to say, he must be affected with these things, and be in sad earnest about them, as he useth to be in other cases, wherein he useth to be most serious; yea, he should be more in earnest here, than in other cases, because it is of a greater concernment unto him. This seriousness produceth.

I. A taking of salvation to heart, more than any thing else, shall men be obliged to seek first the kingdom of God? Matth. 6. 33. Is there but one thing necessary? Luk. 10. 42. Shall Paul count all things loss and dung for this matter? Philip. 3. 8. Is a man a loser, gaining all the world, if he lose his soul? Mark. 8. 36. Shall this be the

only ground of joy, that mens names are written in the book of Life? Luke 10. 20. And shall not men, who would be reckoned serious, take their soul and salvation more to heart than any thing else? Surely it cannot fail. Let none deceive themselves. If the hazard of their soul, and the salvation thereof, and how to be in favour with God, hath not gone nearer to their heart, than any thing in the world beside, it cannot be presumed, upon just grounds, that they ever knew sin, or God, or the everlastingness of his wrath aright.

II. This seriousness breaketh the man's heart, and fainteth the stoutness of it, and leadeth it out to sorrow, as one doth for a first born, Zech. 12. 10. I grant their sorrow will better suit that Scripture afterwards, when they apprehend Christ pierced by their sins.

III. It leadeth the man to a self-loathing. A man taking up himself so, cannot but loath himself for his abominations, whereby he hath destroyed himself. There is somewhat of that spirit of revenge, which is mentioned as a fruit of true repentance, 2 Cor. 7. 11. This self same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what revenge?

IV. This seriousness doth make the man peremptory to find relief; since it is not in himself he dare not put off and delay this business, as before: And this is indeed required, that he find himself so pursued and put to it, that he flee for refuge somewhere I grant some have a higher and some a lesser degree of this seriousness, as we shewed in the former part of this treatise: But if we speak of the Lord's ordinary way of working with those who are come to age, we say, They must very seriously take their soul's estate to heart, despairing of help in themselves, since the whole need not a Physician, but those who are sick,

liek, Matth. 9. 12. As for the measure, we plead only that which probably doth suppose that a man will be induced thereby to transact cordially with Christ, on any terms he doth offer himself to be closed with.

The second thing pre-required of him who would believe on Christ Jesus, is, he must know and take to heart the way of escape from God's wrath: The Spirit must convince him of that righteousness. Here a man must understand somewhat distinctly, that God hath devised a way to save poor lost man by Jesus Christ, whose perfect righteousness hath satisfied offended justice, and procured pardon and everlasting favour to all those whom he perswadech by this gospel, to accept of God's offer, Acts 13. 38, 39. Be it known unto you therefore,-----that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things-----John 1. 12. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. So that no person is excluded, of whatsoever rank or condition, whatsoever hath been his former way, unless he be guilty of the sin against the holy Ghost, which is a malicious hatred and rejection of the remedy appointed for sinners, as who shall hear, for, all manner of sin is forgiven unto these who accept of the offer in God's way, Matth. 12. 31. He is able to save to the uttermost, those that come to God through him, Heb. 7. 25.

The third thing pre-required is, A man must know, that as God hath not excluded him from the relief appointed, so he is willing to be reconciled unto men through Christ, and hath obliged men to close with him through Christ Jesus, and so to impropriate that salvation to themselves, he not only invites all to come, Isa. 55.

1, 2. And welcome all that come, as we find in the gospel, and commendeth those who come as the centurion, Mat. 8. 10. And the woman of Canaan, Matth. 15. 28. And chideth for not coming and closing with him, John 5. 40. And ye will not come to me that ye might have life; and condemneth for not closing so with him, John. 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already; but also he commandeth all to believe on Christ, 1 John 3. 23. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. So as a man is not to question the Lord's willingness to receive men who go to Christ honestly, for God hath abundantly cleared that in scripture. Unless that a man know so much, he will scarcely dare to lay his heart open for that noble device of saving sinners, or adventure his own weight and stress upon Christ Jesus.

The Fourth thing required, is The man who would close with Christ Jesus, must resolve to break all covenants with hell and death, Isa. 28. 15. Whatsoever known evil men are engaged into, they must resolve to fore go it; for there is no concord betwixt Christ and Belial. 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. The Lord requireth, that they who would expect him to be for them should not be for another Hosea 3. 3. This is far from evangelick repentance, which I grant doth not preceed a man's closing with Christ by faith. There is little here beyond a disregard of these things unto which a man was formerly devoted, and a slighting what he was mad upon, because he seeth himself destroyed thereby, and relief now offered, whereupon his heart beginneth to be more intent than formerly it was. After this, when Christ is lookt upon alone, his worth and beauty doth appear so as among all the Gods there is none like unto him, and he looketh out as a sufficient covering of the eyes to all who get him: Upon which the heart loveth

loveth God's device in the new covenant, and loveth to lay its weight upon Christ, rather than any other way, bending towards him, and so the man becometh a believer.

NOW, I will not say that all these things whereof we have spoken, are formally, orderly and distinctly found in every person, before he close with God in Christ, for, the way of the heart with Christ may be added to the four wonderful things, Prov. 30 18, 19. It is hard to trace the heart in its translation from darkness to light, yet we hold out the most ordinary and likely way, to him who doth ask the way, debaring thereby ignorant and senseless persons from meddling, and discharging them to pretend to any interest in him whilst they remain such.

C H A P. IV.

The properties and native consequences of the true believing.

TH E Fourth thing we proposed to speak to is, The properties of this duty when rightly gone about. I shall only hint a few.

I Believing on Christ must be personally

Man himself, and in his own proper person, must close with Christ Jesus. The just shall live by his faith, Hab. 2. 4. This faith, that it will not suffice for a man's safety and relief that he is in covenant with God, as a born member of the visible church, by virtue of the parents subjection to God's ordinances: Neither will it suffice, that the person had the initiating seal of baptism added, and that he then virtually engaged to seek salvation by Christ's blood as all infants do; Neither doth it suffice that men are come of believing parents, their faith will not instate their children into a right to the spiritual blessings of the covenant:
Neither

Neither will it suffice, that Parents did, in some respect, engage for their children, and give them away unto God. All those things doth not avail. The children of the kingdom, and of godly predecessors, are cast out, unless a man in his own person, put out faith in Christ Jesus, and with his own heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners, he cannot be saved. I grant this faith is given unto him by Christ, but certain it is, that it must be personally.

II. This duty must be cordial and hearty : With the heart man believeth unto righteousness Rom. 10. 10. A man must be sincere, and without guilt in closing with Christ judging him the only covering of the eyes, not hankering after another way, the matter must not swim only in the head or Understanding, but it must be in the heart, The man not only must be perswaded that Christ is the way, but affectionately perswaded of it, loving and liking the thing, having complacency in it; so that it is all a man's desire, as David speaking of the covenant, 2 Sam. 23. 5. If a man be cordial and affectionate in any thing truly he must be so here in this one thing that is necessary. It must not be simply a fancy in the head, it must be a heart business, a soul-business; yea, not a business in the outter court of affections, but in the flower of affections, and in the innermost cabinet of the soul, where Christ is formed. Shall a man be cordial in any thing, and not in this, which doth comprize all his chief interests, and his everlasting state with it? Shall the Lord be said to rejoyce over a man, as a bridegroom rejoyceth over his bride? Isa. 62. 5. And to rest in his love with joy, Zeph. 3. 17. And shall not the heart of man go out and meet him here? The heart or nothing, Love or nothing, Marriage-love, which goeth from heart to heart, Love of espousals or nothing, Prov. 23. 26, My son give me

me thine heart, 1 Cor. 13. 2. 3. Though I bestow
all my goods to feed the poor, and though I gave
my body to be burned, and have not charity, it pro-
fiteth me nothing. I will not say, that there is in
all as soon as they believe, a prevailing sensible love
which maketh sick, but there must be in believ-
ing, a rational and kindly love, so well grounded,
and deeply engaged, that many waters cannot
quench it. It is strong as death, and jealousy in it
burneth as fire, Cant. 8. 6. 7.

The third property or qualification of believing,
as it goeth out after Christ, it must be rational.
Hereby I mean: That the man should move
towards God in Christ, in knowledge and under-
standing, taking up God's device of saving sinners
by Christ, as the scripture doth hold it out, not
fancying a Christ to himself, otherwise than the
gospel speaketh of him, nor another way of relief
by him, than the word of God holdeth out. There-
fore we find knowledge joined to the covenant be-
tween God and man, as a requisite, Jer. 24. 7.
And I will give them an heart to know me, that
I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I
will be their God, Jer. 31. 34. And they shall teach
no more every man his neighbour, and every man
his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall
all know me, from the least of them unto the great-
est of them, saith the Lord. I mean here also, that
a man be in calmness of spirit, and (as it were)
in his cold blood in closing with Christ Jesus;
not in a simple fit of affection, which soon va-
nisheth, Mar. 13. 20. He that received the seed
into stony places, the same is he that heareth the
word, and anon with joy receiveth it. Nor in a
distemper through some outward distress, as the
people were, Psal. 78. 34. When he slew them
then they sought him, and proved not stedfast in
thy covenant, nor under a temptation, or some out-
ward temporary interest, as Simon Magus was when
he

he believeth, Acts 8. A man must act here rationally, as being master of himself, in some measure able to judge of the good or evil of the thing, as it stands before him.

The Fourth is, faith; as it goeth out rationally so it goeth out resolutely. The poor distressed people in the gospel, did most resolutely cast themselves upon Christ. This resoluteness of spirit, is in order to all difficulties that ly in the way; violence is offered to these. The man whose heart is a shaping out for Christ Jesus, cannot say, There is a lion in the street, Prov, 26. 13. If he cannot have access by the door, he will break through the roof of the house, with that man Luke 5. 19. He often doth not regard that which the World calleth discretion or prudence, like Zachheus climbing up on a tree to see Christ, when faith was breeding in his bosom, Luke 19. This resoluteness of spirit, looketh towards what inconveniences may follow, and wavereth all these, at least resolving over all these, like a wise builder, who reckoneth the expence before hand, Luke, 14. 28. This resoluteness is also in order to all a man's idols, and such weights as would easily beset him, if he did not bend after Christ over them all, like that blind man, who did cast his garment from him, when Christ called him, Mark, 10. 50. This resoluteness in the soul, proceedeth from desperate self necessity within the man, as it was with the Jaylor, Acts 16. 30. And from the sovereign command of God obliging the man to move towards Christ, 1 John 3. 23. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. And from the good report gone abroad of God, that he putteth none away that come unto him through Christ 1 John 6. 37 But doth commend such as do adventure over the greatest difficulties, as the woman of Canaan, Matth. 15. 28 But above all, This resoluteness doth proceed from
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the arm of J E H O V A H, secretly and strongly drawing the sinner towards Christ, John 6 44. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.

I will not say, That every one, closing with Christ in the offers of the gospel, hath all the forsaide thoughts formally in his mind; yet upon search it will be found, if he be put to it, or put in mind of these things, they are then aloft in the soul.

By what is said, it doth manifestly appear, that many in the visible church, had need to do somewhat further for securing of their soul, when they come to years of discretion, than is found to have been done by them before in the covenant between God and the church, sealed to them in baptism.

By what is said also, there is a competent guard upon the free grace of God in the gospel, held out through Christ Jesus; so as ignorant, senseless profane men cannot, with any shadow of reason, pretend to an interest in it. It is true, believing in Christ, and closing with him as a perfect Saviour, seemeth easy, and every godless man saith, that he believeth on him; But they deceive themselves, since their soul hath never cordially, rationally and resolutely gone out after Christ Jesus, as we have said, it may be some wicked men have been enlightened, Heb. 6. 4. And have found some reel in their fear. Felix trembled, Acts 34 25. Or in their joy, He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, Matth. 13. 20. And Herod hear John gladly, Mark 6. 20. But not having engaged their heart in approaching to God, Jer. 30 21. having either sitte down in that common work as their sanctuary, until the trial came, Mat. 13. 20, 21. When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended:

offended or they return back with the dog to their vomit, from which they had in some measure escaped by the knowledge of the Lord and saviour, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22. Or they utterly fall away to the hatred and malicious despising and persecuting of Christ and his interests, from whence hardly can they be recovered, Heb. 6. 4. 5, 6. and 10. 26. 29. Which things should provoke men to be jealous in this great business.

We come now to speak to the fifth thing proposed, and that is, what be the native consequences of true believing? I shall reduce what I will speak of them to these two viz Union with God, and communion. First then, I say, when a sinner closeth with Christ Jesus, as said is, there is presently an admirable union, a strange oneness between God and the man as the husband and wife, head and body, root and branches, are not to be reckoned two, but one, so Christ. or God in Christ, and the sinner closing with him by faith, are one, We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, &c. Eph. 5. 30, 31, 32. He that is so joynd unto the Lord, is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6. 17. As the father is in the Son, and Christ in the father; so believers are one in the father and the Son: They are one as the father and the Son are one. The father in Christ, and Christ in believers, that they may be made perfect in one, John 17. 21, 22, 23, 26: O what a strange interweaving and indissoluble knot there is!

Because of this union betwixt God and the believer, I. They can never hate one another, henceforth the Lord will never hate the believer: As no man hateth his own flesh at any time, but cherisheth and nourisheth it, so doth Christ his people, Eph. 5. 29. He may be angry, so as to correct and chastise the man that is a believer: but all he doth to him, is for his good and advantage:

vantage : All the Lord's paths must be mercy and truth to him, Psal. 25. 10. All things must work together for good to him, Rom. 8. 28. on the other side, the believer can never hate God maliciously ; for, he that is born of God sinneth not, 1 John 3. 9. For the Lord hath resolved and ordained things so, that his hand shall undoubtedly be so upon all believers for good, that they shall never get leave to hate him, and be so plucked out of his hand.

II. Because of this Union, there is a strange sympathy and fellow-feeling between God and the believer : The Lord is afflicted with the man's affliction, Isa. 63. 9. He doth tenderly, carefully and seasonably relent it, as if he were afflicted with it, he who toucheth the believer, toucheth the apple of the Lord's eyes Zech. 2. 8. He is touched with the feeling of their infirmities, Heb 4. 15 And precious in his sight is their blood, Psal. 116. 15. In a word, what is done unto them, is done unto him, and what is not done unto them, is not done unto him, Matth. 10. 4. He that receiveth you receiveth me, Mat. 25. 40, 45. In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least these my brethren, ye have done it unto me, In as much as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. On the other part, the zeal of his house fixeth in the heart of the believer, Psal. 60. 9. The Lord's reproach lighteth on the believer. If it go well with his affairs, that is the business of his people. So there is a strange sympathy between God and believers, all by virtue of union between them, because of which men should hate every thing which would compete with him in their love or affections, and should disdain to be slaves to the creature since these are the servants of their Lord and husband, and their servants through him: What a hateful thing for a queen to whore with the servant, of her prince

prince and husband? It is also a shame for a believer to be afraid of evil tidings since the Lord, with whom he is one, alone ruleth all things, and doth whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven, and earth, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 23. All things are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods, Psal. 112. 6, 7. Surely he shall not be moved for ever, he shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; his heart is established, he shall not be afraid, Psal. 115. 4. Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased.

The other great consequence of believing, is an admirable unparalell'd communion; by virtue whereof, I. The parties themselves do belong each other. The Lord is the God of his people; He himself, Father, Son, and holy Ghost, is their God, in all his glorious attributes his justice, as well as his mercy, his wisdom, power, holiness, &c. for he becometh the God of his people, as he often speaketh in the covenant. On the other part, the believers are his people. In their very persons, they are his, as the covenant doth speak: They shall be his people; their head, their heart, their hand, &c. whatsoever they are, they are his.

II. By virtue of this communion, they have a mutual interest in one anothers whole goods and gear, in as far as can be useful. All the Lord's word doth belong to the believer. Threatnings, as well as promises, for their good; all his ways, all his works, of all sorts, special communications, death, Devils even all things, in so far as can be useful, 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23. All things are yours: whither Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's. On the other side, all which belongeth to the believer, is the Lords heritage, Children, life, wife, credit, &c. all is at his disposing; if
any

any of these can be useful to him, the believer is to forego them, else he falsifieth that communion, and declareth himself, in so far unworthy of Christ, Luke, 14. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father,-----yea, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

III. By virtue of this communion, there should be much homeliness and familiarity between God and the believer. The Lord may meddle with any thing which doth belong to the believer, and do unto him what seemeth good to him; and the man is not to mistake, or say unto God, what doth thou? except in so far as concerneth his duty; yea, he is still to cry in every case, Good is the word and will of the Lord, Isa. 39. 8. 2 Kings 4. 23. 26. On the other part, the believer may, in an humble way, be homely and familiar with God in Christ; he may come with boldness to the throne of grace, and not use a number of compliments in his addresses unto God, Heb. 4. 16. For he is no more a stranger unto God, Eph. 2. 19. So that he needs not speak unto God, as one who hath acquaintance to make every hour, as many professors do; and it maketh a huge inconsistency in their religion.

The believer also may lay open all his heart unto God, 1 Sam. 1. 15. I have poured out my soul before the Lord, and impart all his secrets unto him, and all his temptations, without fear of a mistake. The believer also may enquire into what God doth in so far as may concern his own duty, or in so far as may ward off mistakes of the Lord's way, and reconcile it with his word; so Job, 13. 15. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: But I will maintain mine own ways before him. The believer is a friend in this respect, as knowing what the master doth see, Gen. 18. 23 &c. Jer. 12. 1. Isa. 63. 17.

The believer also may be homely with God,

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to go in daily with his failings, and seek repentance, pardon and peace through Christ's advocacy, Acts 5. 31. Him hath God exalted, with his right hand to be a prince and a saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins 1 John 2. 1. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. O how often in one day may the believer plead pardon, if he intend not to mock God, or to turn Grace into wantonness! The Lord hath commanded men to forgive seventy times seven times in one day, and hath hinted there in the parable of a king who took account of his Servants, how much more the master will forgive, Matth. 18. 22, 28. The believer may also be homely to entrust God with all his outward concerns, for he doth care for these things, Matth. 6. 30, 31, 32. If God so clothe the grass of the field,----- shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things, 1 Per. 5. 7. Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. Yea, the believer may humbly put God to it, to make him forthcoming for him, in all cases as becometh, and to help him to suitable fruit in every season, even grace in time of need, Heb. 4. 16. Yea, how great things may believers seek from him in Christ Jesus, both for themselves, and others, 1 John 5. 14, 15. If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us John 14. 13. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do Ill. 45. 11. Ask of me things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me, it is the shame and great prejudice of his people, that they do not improve that communion with God more than they do: Christ may

may justly upbraid them, that they ask nothing in his name, John 16. 24.

By what is said, it doth appear, of how great consequence this duty of believing is, by which a man closeth with Christ Jesus, whom the father hath sealed, and given for a covenant to the people. It is so honourable for God, answering his very design, and serving his interest in the whole contrivement and manifestation of the gospel, and it is so advantageous to men, that Satan and an evil heart of unbelief do mightily oppose it, by moving objections against it. I shall hint some most ordinary.

C H A P. V.

Objections taken from a man's unworthiness, and the hainoutness of his sin, answered.

Object. **I** Am so base, worthless and feckless of myself, that I think it were high presumption for me to meddle with Christ Jesus, or the salvation purchased at the rate of his blood.

Ans. It is true, all the children of Adam are base and naughty before him, who chargeth his angels with folly, Job 4. 28. All nations are less than nothing, and vanity before him, Isa. 40. 17. There is such a disproportion between God and men, that unless he himself had devised that covenant, and of his own free will. had offered so to transact with men, it had been high treason for men or angels to have imagined, that God should have humbled himself, and become a servant, and have taken on our nature, and have united it by a personal union to the blessed God-head, and that he should have subjected himself to the shameful death of the cross; and all this that man, who were rebels, should be reconciled unto God, and made eternally happy, by being

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ing in his only company for ever.

But I say, all that was his own device anent free choice: Yea, moreover, if God had not sovereignly commanded men to close with him in and through Christ, Isa. 55. 1, 2, 3. Mat. 11. 28. 1 John 3: 23. 2 Cor. 5. 20. No man durst have made use of that device of his, So then although, with Abigail, I may say, let me be but a servant, to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord. 1 Sam. 25. 41. Yet since he hath in his holy wisdom devised that way, and knoweth how to be richly glorified in it, Eph. 1: 18. The eyes of your understanding being enlightned, that ye may know--- what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, John 17. 10. All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. And he hath commanded me, as I shall be answerable in the great day, to close with him in Christ, as said is, I dare not disobey, nor enquire into the reasons of his contrivements and commands, but must adventure on the business, as I would not be found to frustrate the grace of God, Gal. 2. 21: and in a manner disappoint the gospel, and falsifie the record which God hath born of his Son, that there is life enough in him for men, 1 John 5. 10 11. Andso make God a liar, and add that rebellion to all my former transgressions.

Object. I am a person singularly sinful, beyond any I know; therefore I dare not presume to go near unto Christ Jesus, nor look after that salvation which is through his righteousness.

Ans. Is your sin beyond the drunkennels and incest of Lot: Adultery covered with murder in David: Idolatry and horrid apostasy in Solomon; Idolatry, murder and witchcraft in Manasseh, anger against God, and his way, in Jonah, forswearing of Christ in Peter, after he was forewarned, and had vowed the contrary, bloody persecution in Paul, making the saints to blaspheme, &c.
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(but wo to him who is emboldened to sin by these instances recorded in scripture, and adduced here, to the commendation of the free and rich grace of God; and to encourage poor penitent sinners to flee to Christ) I say, are your sins beyond these? Yet all these obtained pardon through Christ, as the scripture doth shew.

Know therefore, that all sins do ly alike level before the grace of God, who loveth freely, *Hos. 14. 4.* And looketh not to less or more sin. If the person have a heart to come unto him through Christ, then he is able to save to the uttermost, *Heb. 7. 25.* Yea, it is more provoking before God, not to close with Christ when the offer cometh to a man, than all the rest of his transgressions are for he that believeth not, hath made God a liar, in that record he hath born of life in the Son, *1 John 5. 10, 11.* And he who doth not believe shall be condemned for not believing on the Son of God *John 3. 18.* That shall be the main thing in his ditty; so that much sin cannot excuse a man, if he fear at Christ, and shift his offer, since God hath openly declared, that this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, Christ came to save sinners, whereof I am chief, Even he who is chief of sinners in his own apprehension, is bound to believe and accept this saying, *1 Tim 1. 15.*

Object. My sins have some aggravating circumstance beyond the same sins in other persons, which doth much terrifie me.

Ans. What can the aggravation of thy sins be; which are not paralleled in the forecited examples? Is thy sin against great Light? So behoved many of these we spake of before, was it against singular mercies and deliverances? So was that of Lot's and Noah's drunkenness. Was thy sin done with much deliberation? So was David's whilst he wrote the Letter against Uriah.

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Was it against, or after any singular Manifestation of God? So was Solomons. Was it by a small, and despicable Temptation? So was that Jonah and of Peter, if we consider the hainousness of their Transgression hast thou reiterated the Sin, and committed it over again? So did Lot, so did Peter, so did Jehoshaphat in joyning with Ahab and Jehoram, 1 Kings 22. 2 Kings 3. Are there many gross sins concurring together in thee? So were there in Manasseh. Hast thou stood long out in Rebellion? (that as the former is thy shame: But) so did the Thief on the Crosse; he stood it out to the last gasp, Luke 23 42, 43. If yet thou hast an Ear to hear, thou art commanded to hear, Matth. 13. 9 Although thou hast long spent thy Money for that which is not Bread, Isa. 1. 2. Thou hast the greater need now to make haste, and to flee for refuge; and if thou do so, he shall welcome thee, and in no wise cast thee out, John 6. 37. Especially, since he hath used no prescription of time in scripture, So that all those Aggravations of thy sin will not excuse thy shifting of the Lord's offer.

Object. in all these Instances given, you have not named the particulars whereof I am guilty; nor know I any who ever obtained mercy before God, being guilty of such thing as are in me.

Ans. It is hard to condescend upon every particular transgression which may vex the conscience, yea, lesser sins than some of those I have mentioned, may hugely disquite, if the Lord blow the fire. but, for thy Satisfaction, I shall condescend upon some truths of scripture, which do reach sins and cases more universally, than any man can do particularly, See Exod. 34. 7. God pardoneth Iniquity, transgression and sin that is, all manner of sin. Ezek. 18. 21, 22, 30. If a man turn from all his Wickedness, it shall no more be remembered, or prove his ruin. John 6. 37. Him that cometh

cometh, he will in no wise cast out, that is, whatsoever be his sins, or the Aggravation of them, John 3. 16. Whosoever believeth shall have ever lasting Life; That is without Exception of any sin, of any case, Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save to the uttermost, these who come to God through him, no man can sufficiently declare what is God's uttermost, Mat. 12. 31. All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, that is, there is no sort of sin, whereof one Instance shall not be forgiven in one person or other, except the sin against the holy Ghost, these and the like Scriptures, do carry all sorts of sin before them; so that, let thy sins be what they will or can be, they may be sunk in one of these Truths, so as thy sin can be no excuse to thee for shifting the Offer of peace and Salvation through Christ, since any man who will, is allowed to come and take, Rev. 22. 27.

We will not multiply words: The great God of heaven and earth hath sovereignly commanded all who see their need of relief, to betake themselves unto Christ Jesus, and to close cordially with God's Device of saving sinners by him, laying aside all Objections and excuses, as they shall be answerable unto him in the day he shall judge the quick and the dead, and shall drive away out of his presence all those who dare to say, their sins and condition were such as that they durst not adventure upon Christ's perfect righteousness for the relief, notwithstanding of the Lord's own Command often interposed, and in a manner his credit engaged.

C H A P. VI.

Of the sin against the holy Ghost.

Object. I suspect I am guilty of the sin against the holy Ghost, and so am incapable of pardon; and therefore I need not think of believing

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on Christ Jesus for saving my soul.

Ans^w. Although none should charge this sin on themselves, or on others, unless they can prove and instruct the charge according to Christ's example, Mat. 12. 5, 26, 32. Yet for satisfying of the doubt, I shall, 1. Shew what is not the sin against the holy Ghost, properly so called, because there be some gross sins which people do unwarrantably judge to be this unpardonable sin. 2. I shall shew what is the sin against the holy Ghost. 3. I shall draw some conclusion in answer directly to the objection.

As for the first. There be many gross sins against the holy Ghost, who is God equal and one with the Father and the Son, and are done against some of his operations and motions, yet are they not the sin against the holy Ghost, which is the unpardonable sin as. First, Blaspheming of God under bodily tortures, is not that sin; for some saints fell into this, Acts 26. 11. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, much less, blaspheming God in a fit of distraction, or frenzie, for a man is not a free rational agent at that time; and he that spareth his people as a father doth his son that serveth him, Mal. 3. 17. And pitieth them that fear him, as a father pitieth his children, Psal. 103. 13. So doth he spare and pity in those ravings; for so would our fathers according to the flesh do, if we blasphemed them in a fit of distraction, much less are horrid blasphemies against God, darted in upon the soul, and not allowed there, this unpardonable sin, for such things were offered to Christ, Matth. 4. And are often cast in upon the saints.

II. The hating of good in others, whilst I am not convinced that it is good, but in my light do judge it to be evil; yea, the speaking against it, yea the persecuting of it in that case, is not the sin against the holy Ghost, for all these will be found
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in Paul before he was converted, and he obtained mercy, because he did these things ignorantly.

III. Heart rising at the thriving of others in the work and way of God, whilst I love it in my self, yea, the rising of heart against providence, which often expresseth it self against the creatures nearest our hand, yea, this rising of heart entertained and maintained, (although they be horrid things leading towards that unpardonable sin, yet) are not that sin, for these may be in the saints, proceeding from self love, which cannot endure to be darkned by another, and proceeding from some cross in their idol under a fit of temptation, the most part of all this was in Jonah 4.

IV. Not only are not decays in what once was in the man, and falling into gross sins against light, after the receiving of the truth, this unpardonable sin, for then many of the saints in scripture were undone: But further, Apostasy from much of the truth, is not that sin, for that was in Solomon, and in the Church of Corinth and Galatia, yea, denying, yea forswearing of the most fundamental truth under a great temptation, is not this sin, for then Peter had been undone.

V. As resisting, quenching, grieving and vexing of the Spirit of God by many sinfull ways, are not this unpardonable sin, for they are charged with these, who are called to repentance in scripture and not shut out as guilty of this sin, so neither reiterating sin against light, is the sin against the holy Ghost, although it leadeth toward it, for such was Peter's sin in denying Christ; so was Jehoshaphat's sin in joyning with Ahab and Jehoram.

VI. Purposes and essays of self murder, and even purposes of murdering godly men, the party being under a sad fit of temptation, (although probably it often joyneth in the issue with this unpardonable sin, which ought to make every soul look upon the very temptation, to it with horror

and Abhorrency yet,) is not the sin against the holy Ghost. The Jaylor intended to kill himself, upon a worse account than many poor people do, in the sight and sense of God's wrath, and of their own sin and corruption, yet that Jaylor obtained pardon Acts 16. 27. 34. And Paul before his effectual calling was accessory unto the murder of many saints and intended to kill more, as himself granteth Acts 26. 9. 10. 11, 12.

Although all these are dreadful sins, each of them deserving wrath everlasting, and not being repented of, bring eternal Vengeance, especially the last cuts off hope of relief, for ought can be expected in an ordinary way, yet none of these is the unpardonable sin against the holy Ghost, and so under any of these there is hope to him that hath an ear to hear the joyful sound of the covenant, all manner of such sin and blasphemy may be forgiven is as clear in the scripture, where these things are mentioned.

As for the second thing, let us see what the sin against the holy Ghost is, it is not a simple Act of transgression, but a complex of many mischievous things involving soul and body ordinarily in guilt, we thus describe it. it is a rejecting and opposing of the chief gospel truth, and way of salvation made out singularly to a man by the Spirit of God in the truth and good thereof, and that avowedly, freely, wilfully, maliciously, and spitefully, breeding hopeless fear. There be three places of scripture which do speak most of this sin and thence we will prove every part of this Description, in so far as may be useful to our present purpose, by which it will appear, that none who have a mind for Christ, need stumble at what is spoken of this sin in scripture, see Matth. 12. 23-----32. Heb. 6. 4. 5, 6 and 25---29.

First. Then, let us consider the Object about which the sin, or sinful acting of the man guilty thereof,

thereof, is conversant, and that is the chief gospel-truth and way of Salvation, both which run to one thing, it is the way which God hath contrived for saving of sinners by Christ Jesus the promised Messiah and Saviour. by whose Death and righteousness men are to be saved, as he hath held forth in the Ordinances, confirming the same by many mighty works in scripture tending there away, this way of Salvation is the Object, the Pharisees oppose this, that Christ was the Messiah, Matth 12. 23 24. And all the people said, is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, this Fellow doth not cast out Devils, but by Beezebub the Prince of the Devils, the wrong is done against the Son of God, Heb. 6. 6. It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. Against the blood of the covenant, and the Spirit graciously offering to apply these things, Heb. 10, 29 Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall he be thought worthy who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.

Secondly, In the description, consider the qualification of this object, It is singularly made out to the party by the Spirit of God, both in the truth and good thereof, this faith, 1. That there must be knowledge of the truth and way of Salvation, the Pharisees knew that Christ was the heir, Mat. 21. 38. But when they saw the Son, they said among themselves, this is the heir, come, let us kill him, the party hath knowledge, Heb. 10. 26 But if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for sin. 2. That knowledge of the thing must not swim only in the head, but there must be some half heart-perswasion of it. Christ knew the Pharisees

thoughts Matth. 12. 25. And so did judge them, and that the contrary of what they spake was made out upon their heart. There is a tasting, which is beyond simple enlightning, Heb. 6. 4, 5. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightned and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have tasted of the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come. Yea, there is such perswasion ordinarily as leadeth to a deal of outward sanctification, Heb. 10. 29. Who hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing. 3. This perswasion must not only be of the verity of the thing but of the good of it, the party tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come, Heb. 6. 5. And he apprehendeth the thing as legibel. 4 This perswasion is not made out only by strength and argument, but also by an enlightning work of God's Spirit shining on the truth, and making it conspicuous, therefore is that sin called, the sin against the holy Ghost, Matth. 12. 31. Mark 3. 29. The persons are to have been made partakers of the holy Ghost, Heb. 6. 4. And to do despite unto the Spirit of grace, Heb. 10. 29 Who was in the nearest step of a gracious operation with them.

Thindly In this detcription consider the acting of the party against the object so qualified, it is a rejecting and opposing of it, which importeth, 1, That man have once, some way at least, been in hands with it, or had the offer of it, as is true of the pharisees. 1. That they do reject, even with contempt, what they had of it, or in their offer, The pharisees deny it and speak deceitfully of Christ Mat. 12. 24. This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beezebub the prince of the devils. They fall away, intending to put Christ to an open shame Heb. 6. 6. 3. T. men set themselves against it by the Spirit of Persecution as the pharisees did st 11. They rail against it: therefore it is called blasphemy

blasphemy against the holy Ghost, Mat. 12. 24, 31. They would crucifie Christ again, if they could, Heb. 6. 6. They are adversaries, Heb. 10. 27.

Fourthly, Consider the properties of this acting. 1. It is avowed, that is, not seeking to shelter or hide it self. The pharisees speak against Christ publickly, Mat. 12. 24. They would have Christ brought to an open shame, Heb. 6. 6. They forsake the ordinances which favour that way, Heb. 10. 25. and despise the danger, for, looking for indignation, they trample that blood still, Heb. 10. 27, 29. 2. The party acteth freely, It is not from unadvisedness, nor from force or constraint, but an acting of free choice, nothing doth force the pharisees to speak against and persecute Christ, they crucify to themselves, they reject the murder of their own free accord, and in their own bosom, none constraining them, Heb. 6. 6. They sin of free choice, or, as the word may be rendred, Spontaneously, Heb. 10. 26, 30. It is acted wilfully. They are so resolute, that they will not be dissuaded by any offer or the most precious means, as is clear in the foresaid scriptures. 4. It is done maliciously, so as it proceeds not so much, if at all, from a temptation to pleasure, profit, or honour. It proceedeth not from fear, or force, or from any good end proposed, but out of heart malice against God and Christ, and the advancement of his glory and kingdom, so that it is the very nature of Satan's sin who hath an irreconcilable hatred against God and the remedy of sin, because his glory is thereby advanced. This is a special ingredient in this Sin the pharisees are found guilty of heart malice against Christ, since they spake so against him and not against their own children casting out devils, and this is the force of Christ's argument, If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? Matth. 12. 27. They do their utmost to crucifie Christ again, and to bring

him to an open shame, Heb. 6. 6. They are adversaries like the Devil, Heb. 10. 27. 5. It is done despitefully. the malice must beware it self, the Pharisees must proclaim, that Christ hath correspondence with Devils, Mar. 12. 24. He must be put to an open shame, and crucified again, Heb. 6. 6. They must tread under foot that blood, and do despite to the Spirit, Heb. 10. 29 So that the party had rather perish a thousand times, than bein Christ's debt for Salvation.

The last thing in the description, is, the ordinary attendent or consequence of this sin; It breedeth desperate and hopeles fear; they fear him whom they hate, with a flesh hopeles fear, such as Devils have, Heb. 10. 27. A certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the advertaries. They know that God will put out his power against them; They Tremble in the Remembrance of it; and if they could be above him, and destroy him, they cover it; and since they cannot reach that, they hate with the utmost of Heart malice, and do persecute him, and all that is his, with Despite.

As for the Third thing proposed, viz. The conclusions to be drawn from what is said, whereby we will speak directly to the Objection. I As I hinted before, since the sin against the holy Ghost is so remarkable, and may be well known where it is, none should charge themselves with it, unless, they can prove and instruct the charge; for it is a great wrong done unto God, to labour to persuade my soul that he will never pardon me. It is the very way to make me desperate and to lead me unto the unpardonable sin, therefore, unless thou can and dare say, that thou dost hate the way which God hath devised for saving of sinners, and dost resolve to oppose the thriving of his kingdom, both with thy self and others, out of malice and Despite against God, thou oughtest not to suspect thy

thy self guilty of this sin. 2. Whatsoever thou hast done against God, if thou dost rue it, and wish it were undone, thou cannot be guilty of this sin; for in it, heart malice and despite against God do still prevail. 3. If thou art content to be his debtor for pardon, and would be infinitely obliged unto him for it, then thou cannot in that case, be guilty of the sin against the holy Ghost; for, as we shewed before, they who are guilty of it, do so despite God, that they would not be his debtors for salvation. 4. Whatsoever thou hast done, if thou hast a desire after Jesus Christ, and dost look with a love heart after him, and cannot think of parting with his blessed company for ever, or if thou must shed with him yet dost wish well to him, and all his thou needest not suspect thy self to be guilty of this unpardonable sin, for there can be no such hatred of him in thy bottom, as is necessarily required to make up that sin. 5. If thou would be above the reach of that sin, and secure against it forever, then go work up thy heart to please salvation by Christ Jesus, and to close with God in him acquiescing in him as a sufficient ransom and rest, as we have been pressing before, and yield to him to be saved in his way. Do this in good earnest, and thou shalt be for ever put out of the reach of that ugly thing, wherewith Satan doth affright so many poor Seekers of God.

C H A P. VII.

Objections, taken from want of power to believe, and unfruitfulness answered.

Obj. 1. **A**LTHOUGH I be not excluded from the benefit of the new covenant, yet it is not in my power to believe upon Christ, for faith is the gift of God, and above the strength of flesh and blood,

Answers

Ans^w. It is true, that saving faith by which alone a man can heartily close with God in Christ is above our power, and is the gift of God, as we said before in the premisses : Yet remember, First, The Lord hath left it as a duty upon all who hear this gospel, cordially by faith to close with this offer of salvation through Christ, as is clear in the scripture. And you must know, that although it be not in our power to perform that duty of our selves, yet the Lord may justly condemn for not performing of it, and we are inexcusable, because at first he made man perfectly able to do whatsoever he should command 2dly. The Lord commanding this thing, which is above our power, willeth us to be sensible of our inability to do the thing, and would have us putting it on him to work it in us. He that promised to give the new heart, and he hath not excluded any from the benefit of that promise. 3dly, The Lord useth by these commands and invitations, and mens meditations on the same, and their supplication about the thing, to convey power unto the soul to perform the duty.

Therefore, for answer to the objection, I do obtest thee in the Lord's name, to lay to heart these his commandments and promises, and meditate on them, and upon that blessed business of the new covenant, and pray unto God, as you can, over them, for he will be enquired to do these things, Ezek. 36. 37. And lay thy cold heart to that device of God exprest in the scriptures, and unto Christ Jesus, who is given for a covenant to the people, and look to him for life and quickning. Go and essay to please that salvation in the way God doth offer it, and to close with, and rest on Christ for it as if all were in thy power : Yet looking to him for the thing, as knowing that it must come from him, and if thou do so, he who meets these who remember him in his ways, Isa. 64. 5. Will not be wanting on his part, and thou shalt not have ground
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to say, that thou movedst towards the thing until thou could do no more for want of strength, and so left it at God's door: It shall not fail on his part, if thou have a mind for the business, yea I may say, if by all thou hast ever heard of that matter, thy heart loveth it, and desireth to be in hands with it, thou hast it already performed within thee, so that difficulty is past, before thou was aware of it.

Obj-ct. Many who have closed with Christ Jesus, as said is are still complaining of their lean-ness, and fruitfulness, which maketh my heart lay the less weight on that duty of believing.

Ans. If thou be convinced that it is a duty to believe on Christ, as said is, you may not shift it under any pretence, as for these complaints of some who have looked after him not admitting every one to be judge of his own fruit, I say.

I. Many by their jealousies of God's love and by their misbelief, after they have so closed with God; do obstruct many precious communications, which otherwise would be let out to them, Matth. 13. 58. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief:

II. It cannot be that any whole heart is gone out after Christ, have found him a wilderness, Jer. 2. 31. Surely they find somewhat in their Spirit swaying them towards God in these two great things viz. How to be found in him that day, Philip. 3. 8, 9. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith, of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, and how to be forthcoming to his praise in the land of the living Psal. 119. 17. Deal bountifully with thy servant that

I may live and keep thy word, Psal. 56. 13. Wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living? They find these two things aloft in the soul, and that is much, Moreover, they shall after search, if they judge aright, find ever since an emptiness in the creatures, which abundance of the creature cannot fill up, all is vanity, only God can fill the empty room in their heart; and when he but breatheth a little, there is no room for additional comfort from creatures. This saith that God hath captivated the man, and hath fixed that saving principle in the understanding and heart, who is God, but the Lord? Worship him all ye gods, Psal. 97. 7. Yea, further, these whole heart hath closed with God in Christ as said is, will not deny that there have been seasonable preventings and quicknings now and then when thy soul was like to fail, Psal. 21. 3. For thou preventest me with the blessings of thy Goodness, Psal. 94. 18, 19. When I said, my foot slippeth thy mercy, O Lord held me up, in the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul, Therefore let none say, That there is no fruit following and let none shift their duty upon the unjust and groundless complaints of others.

C H A P. VII.

Of covenanting with God.

Object. **A**LTHOUGH I judge it my duty to close with God's device in that Covenant, I am in the dark how to manage the duty, for sometimes God doth offer to be our God without any mention of Christ, and sometimes saith That he will betroth us unto him, and in other places of scripture, we are called to come to Christ, and he is the bridegroom. Again God sometimes speaketh of himself as a Father to men, sometimes,

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as a husband ; Christ is sometimes called the husband and sometimes a brother, which relations seem inconsistent, and do much put me in the dark how to apprehend God, when my heart would agree with him, and close with him.

Ans^r. It may be very well said, That men do come to God, or close with him, and yet they come to Christ, and close with him, they may be said to come under a Marriage relation unto God, and unto Christ also, who is husband, father, brother &c. to them ; and there is no such mystery here as some do conceive.

For the better understanding of it, consider these few things. I. Although God made man perfect at the beginning, and put him in some capacity of transacting with him immediately, Eccl. 7. 29. God hath made man upright, Gen. 2. 16, 17. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, &c. Yet man, by his fall, did put himself at a perfect distance with God and in an utter incapacity to bargain or deal any more with immediately.

II. The Lord did after Adam's fall, make manifest the new covenant, in which he did signify he was content to transact with man again in and through a mediator, and so did appoint men to come to him through Christ, Heb. 7. 25. He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come to God by him and to look for acceptance only in him, Eph. 1. 6. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, ordaining men to hear Christ, he being the only party in whom God was well related, Mar. 17. 5. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him.

III. This matter is so clear, and supposed to be so notour in the scripture, and so manifest to all who are under the ordinances, that the Lord doth often speak of transacting with himself, not making mention of the mediator, because it is supposed,

that

that every one in the church knoweth that now there is no dealing with God, except by and through Christ Jesus the Mediator.

IV. Consider that Christ Jesus, is not only a fit tryſting place for God and man to meet into and a fit ſpokeſman to treat between the parties now at variance, 2 Cor. 5. 19. God was in Chriſt, reconciling the world unto himſelf, But we may ſay alſo, he is immediate bridegroom and ſo our cloſing or tranſacting with God, may be juſtly called the marriage of the kings ſon, and the elect may be called the lamb's wife, Chriſt Jesus being (as it were) the hand which God holdeth out unto men, and on which they lay hold when they deal with God, and ſo through and by Chriſt, we cloſe with God, as our God, on whom our ſoul doth terminate laſtly and intimately through Chriſt, 1 Pet. 1. 21. Who by him do believe in God that raiſed him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

V. Consider that the divers relations mentioned in ſcripture, are ſet down, to ſignifie the ſure and indiſſolvable union and communion between God and his people, whatſoever nearnels is between head and member, root and branches, king and ſubjects, Shepherd and flock, father and children, brother and brother, husband and wife, &c. all is here, John 17. 21, 22, 23, 26. And they all ſhall be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou haſt ſent me. And the glory which thou gav'ſt me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou haſt ſent me, and haſt loved them, as thou haſt loved me, And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them, So that whatſoever

soever be spoken in scripture, people may be clear, that God calleth them to be reconciled unto him through Christ, and doth offer himself to be their God and husband in him alone, and men are to accept God to be their God in Christ, pleasing that way of relief for poor man, and to give up themselves unto God in Christ, in whom alone they can be accepted, and they who close with Christ, they do close with God in him, who is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, 2Cor. 5. 19. John 14. 8, 9, 10, 11. And we are not to dip further in the divers relations mentioned in scriptures between God or Christ, and men, that as they may point out union and communion, or nearness with God through Christ Jesus, and our advantage thereby.

These things being clear, we will not multiply words but since to believe on Christ is the great duty required of all that hear this gospel, we obtest every one in the Lord's name, to whom the report of this shall come, that without delay they take to heart their lost condition in themselves, and that they lay to heart the relief which God hath provided by Jesus Christ, whereof he hath made a free offer unto all who will be content of the same, and to be saved that way, and that they lay to heart, that there is no other way of escape from the wrath that is to come, because of which men would be glad at the last day, to run into a lake of melted lead, to be hid from the face of the lamb. whom they do here despise, we lay, we obtest all in the consideration of these things, to work up their heart to this business and to lay themselves open for God, and to receive him through Christ in the offers of the gospel, enjoying in him, as the only desirable and satisfying good, that so they may secure themselves, Go speedily and search for his offers of peace and salvation in the scripture, and work up your heart and soul to close with them, and with Christ in them, and with God in Christ, and do it so, as
you

you may have this to say, that you were serious, and in earnest, and cordial here, as ever you were in any thing to your apprehension, and for ought you know, Christ is the choice of your heart, at least, you neither know nor allow any thing to the contrary, whereupon your heart doth appeal unto God to search and try if there be ought amiss, to rectifie it, and lead unto the right way.

Now this cleaving of the heart unto him, and casting it self upon him to be saved in his way, is believing; which doth indeed secure a man from the wrath that is to come because now he hath received Christ, and believeth on him, and so shall not enter into condemnation. as saith the scripture.

Object When I hear what it is to believe on Christ Jesus, I think sometimes I have faith; for I dare say, to my apprehension, I please the invention of saving sinners by Christ Jesus, my heart goeth out after him, and doth terminate upon him as a satisfying treasure, and I am glad to accept God to be my God in him. But I often do question it ever I have done so, and so am, for the most part, kept hesitating and doubting If I do believe, or be savingly in covenant with God.

Answer. It is ordinary for many whose hearts are gone out after Christ in the gospel, and have received him. to bring the same in question again: Therefore I shall advise one thing as a notable help to fix the soul in the maintaining faith, and an interest in God, and that is, that men not only close heartily with God in Christ, as said is, but also, that they expressly, explicirely by word of mouth and vive voice, and formally close with Christ Jesus and accept God's offer of salvation through him, and so make a covenant with God. All this by God's blessing, may contribute not a little for establishing them anent their saving interest in God.

Before I speak directly to this express covenanting with God, I premise these few things, 1.

I do not here intend a covenanting with God essentially differing from the covenant between God and the visible church, as the Lord doth hold it out in his revealed will, neither do I intend a covenant, differing essentially from the transacting of the heart with God in Christ, formerly spoken unto: It is that same covenant, only it differeth by a singular circumstance, viz. The formal expression of the thing, which the heart did before practise.

II. I grant this expresse covenanting and transacting with God, is not absolutely necessary for a man's salvation. for if any person close heartily and sincerely with God, offering himself in Christ in the Gospel, his soul and state is thereby secured, according to the scripture, although he utter not words with his mouth: But this expresse verbal covenanting with God, is very expedient, for the better being of a man's state, and his more comfortable maintaining of an interest in Christ Jesus.

III. This expresse covenanting with God by word of mouth, is of no worth, without sincere heart closing with God in Christ joined with it; for without that, it is but a profaning of the Lord's name, and mocking of him to his face, so to draw near unto him with the lips, whilst the heart is far away from him:

IV. I grant both cordial and verbal transacting with God, will not make out a man's graciousestate unto him, so as to put and keep it above controversy, without the joint witness of the spirit, by which we know what is freely given unto us of God yet this explicate way of transacting with God, joined with that hearts closing with him in Christ, contributes much for clearing up unto a man that there is a fixed bargain between God and him and will do much to ward off him many groundless jealousies and objections of an unstable mind and heart, which uselessly affrontedly to deny this hour, what it did really act and perform the former hour

hoer. This explicite covenanting, is as an instrument taken of what pass between God and the soul and so hath its own advantage for strengthening of faith.

As for this expresse covenanting, we shall, 1. Shew that it is a very warrantable practice 2. We shall shew shortly what is preparatorily required of those who do so transact with God. 3. How men shall go about that duty. 4. What should follow thereupon.

As to the First, I say, It is a warrantable practice, and an incumbent duty, expressly and by word to covenant with God; Which appeareth thus.

I. In many places of scripture, if we look to what they may bear according to their scope, and the analogy of faith, God hath commanded it, and left it on people as a duty, Isa. 44. 5. One shall say, I am the Lord's Isa. 45. 24. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength, Jer. 3. 4. Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth? Zech. 13. 9. They shall say, the Lord is my God, Hos. 2. 16. Thou shalt call me Ishi. And in many places else-where, Now since God hath so clearly left it on man in the letter of the word, they may be perswaded, that it is a practice warranted and allowed by him, and well pleasing unto him.

II. Argument, It is the approved practice of the saints in scripture, thus expressly to covenant with God, and they have found much quiet in that duty afterwards, David did often expressly say unto God, that he was his God; his portion, and that himself was his servant. Thomas will put his interest out of question with it, John 20. 28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God, Yea, I say, The saints are much quieted in remembrance of what hath past that way between God and them, psal. 73. 25. Whom have I

in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee, Psal. 142. 5. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living. We find it often so in the book of the Canticles. Now shall the chief worthies of God be so much in a dury, breeding so much quiet and satisfaction to them in many cases, and shall we under the new testament, unto whom access is ministred abundantly and who partake of the sap of the olive; shall we I say, ly behind in this approven piece of homeliness with God? Since we study to imitate that cloud of Witnesses in other things, as such, zeal, patience, &c. Let us also imitate them in this.

III. Argument. The thing about which we move here, is a matter of the greatest Concernment in all the world; It is the life of our soul, Dut. 32. 47. Oh! shall men study to be expresse explicite, plain and peremptory in all their other great businesses, because they are such; and shall they not much more be peremptory and expresse in this, which doth most concern them? I wonder that many not only do not speak it with their mouth, but that they do not swear and subscribe it with their hand, and do not every thing for securing of God to themselves in Christ, and themselves unto God, which the scripture doth warrant Isa. 44. 5.

This also may have it's own weight, as an argument to preis this way of covenanting with God, that the Business of an interest in Christ, and of real and honest transacting with him, is a thing, which in the experience of saints, is most frequently brought upon debate and in question, therefore men had need, all the ways they can, even by thought, word, and deed, to put it to a point

This also may have place here for preserving this

this is a duty, that God is so formal, exprels, distinct and legal, to say so, in all the business of man's salvation, viz. Christ must be a near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption doth belong; he must be chosen, called, authorized and sent, covenants formally drawn between the Father and him, the Father accepting payment and satisfaction, giving formal discharges, all done clearly and expressly. Shall the Lord be so exprels, plain and preptory in every part of the business, and shall our part of it rest in a confused thought, and we be as dumb beasts before him? If it were marriage between man and wife, it would not be judged enough, although there were consent in heart given by the woman and known to the man; if she did never exprels so much by word, being in a capacity to do so, now this covenant between God and man, is held out in scripture, as a marriage between man and wife Hos. 2. 19. 20. 2 Cor. 11. 2. The whole song of Solomon speaketh it, the Lord useth similitudes, to signifie unto us what he intends; and surely this is a special requisite in marriage, that the wife give an exprels and explicate consent unto the business: The man saith, So I take thee to be my lawful wife, and do oblige my self to be a dutiful husband: the woman is obliged on the other part, to exprels her consent, and to say even so I take thee to be my lawful husband, and do promise duty and subjection. It is so here; the Lord saith, I do betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt call me Ishi, that is, my husband, Hos. 2. 16. 20. I will be for thee as a head and a husband, if thou wilt not be for another, Hosea 3. 3. The man ought to answer, and say, Amen, so be it, thou shalt be my God, my head and Lord, and I shall and will be thine, and not for another, Cant. 6. 3. I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine. And so this making of the cove-

nan

nant with God, is called a giving of the hand to him; as the word is, 1 Cor. 30. 8. Which doth hint a very express, formal, explicate and positive bargaining with God, so then, we conclude it to be an incumbent duty, and a very approved practice, necessary for the quieting of a man's mind and his more comfortable being in covenant with God, and more fully answering God's condescendency and offer in that great and primary promise, I will be your God, and you shall be my people.

Not only may and should people thus expressly close with God in Christ for fixing their heart; but they may, upon some occasions renew this verbal transaction with God, especially, when through temptations they are made to question if ever they have really and sincerely closed covenant with God. As they are then to put out new acts of faith, embracing Christ as the desirable portion and treasure and also upon other occasions, so it were expedient, especially if there remain any doubt anent the thing, that by vive voice and express word, they determin that controversy, and say of the Lord, and to him, that he is their refuge and portion, Psal. 91. 2. Psal. 142. 5. We find the saints doing so, and we may imitate them especially.

I. In the time of great backsliding, people were wont to renew the covenant with God, and we should do so also, our heart should go out after Christ in the promises of reconciliation with God, for he is our peace upon all occasions, and our advocate, and we are bound to apprehend him so when we transgress, 1 John 2. 1. If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And to express so much by word, as the saints did in their formal renewing of the covenant.

II. When people are in hazard, and difficulties

ties are present or foreseen, then it were good that they should send their heart out after him, and express their adhering unto him for securing their own heart, we find Joshua doing so, when he was to settle in the land of Canaan, in the midst of snares, Joshua 24. So David doth in his straits Psal. 57. 1. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast.

III. When men apprehend God to be at a distance from them, and their soul to be under withering and decay, then it is safest heartily to close with Christ, and embrace him by faith, for the securing of the soul, and it were good to put it out of question, by the expression of the thing. This is the ready way to draw sap from Christ the root, for recovering of the soul, and for establishing the heart before him. The spouse in the song of Solomon doth so, thus asserting her interest in him, when in such a condition, professing and avowing him to be her beloved, Cant. 5.

IV. At the celebration of the Lord's supper, men should thus cordially close with God in Christ, and speak and express so much, for, that is a feast of love, and then, and there we come under a solemn profession of closing with God in Christ personally and openly, and do receive the seal of it: It is therefore beseeming, at that time, to bring up both heart and tongue to second and answer our profession apprehending God to be our God, and resigning over our selves to be his, and at his disposing.

We shall not confine the Lord's people to times and seasons of this duty, the Lord may bind it upon them at his pleasure, only there is hazard, that by too frequent expressing covenanting with God, men turn too formal in it, therefore it is not so fit that people should ordinarily at full length renew that explicate transaction with God

but rather to declare unto God, that they adhere unto the covenant made with him, and that they do maintain and will never revoke nor recal the same, and withal, they may hint the Sum of it in laying Claim unto God in Christ, as their own God: And this they may do often, even in all their Addresses to God, and probably this is the thing designed by the Saints in their so ordinary practice in Scripture, whilst, they assert their Interest in God, as their God and portion; and it is fir, that men, in their Walk, hold their heart at the business, by heart cleaving to God in Christ, the Life we live in the flesh, should be by faith in the Son of God, Gal. 2. 2.

As to the Second thing, viz. What is preparatorily required in him who is expressly to transact with God here, beside what we spoke before, as previous to a man's closing with Christ Jesus, we only add. 1. That he who would explicitly bargain with God must know, that to do so, is warranted and allowed by God, as we shewed before if this be wanting, a man cannot do it in faith, and so it will be sin unto him, Rom. 14. 23. Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. 2. The man must labour to bring up his heart to the thing, that it do not belie the Tongue; it will be a great mocking of God so to draw near him with the Lips, whilst the heart is far off from him, Isa. 29. 13.

The Third thing to be considered in this express verbal covenanting with God, is, the way how it is to be performed and managed, and beside what was said before in heart closing with Christ, I add here.

1. The man should do it confidently, not only believing that he is about his duty when he doth it but also, that God in Christ Jesus will accept of his poor imperfect way of doing this duty; he doth accept a man according to what he hath if

there be a willing mind, 2 Cor. 8. 12. A Mite is accepted since it is all the poor Woman's substance, Mark 12. 44. Yea, if it can be attained, the man should believe that the Issue and consequence of this transacting shall prove comfortable, and all shall be well, and that God who engageth for all in the covenant, (since he hath determined the man to this happy choice) will in some measure make him forthcoming, and will perfect what concerns him, faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it, 1 Thess. 5. 24. If this confidence be wanting, the matter will be done with much fear and Jealousie, if not worse, and will still prove a disquieting business to the man.

II. It should be done holily, it is called the holy covenant, Luke 1. 72. The holy things of David, Acts 13. 34. Here it were fitting, that what is done in this express transacting with God, should not be done passingly, and on the by, but in some special addresse unto God; the thing should be spoken unto the Lord, Psal. 142. 5. I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my Refuge, and my portion, it is beleeving in so great a business, that a piece of time were set apart for confession and Supplication before God; yea also the person so transacting with God, should labour to have high Apprehensions of God's greatness and Sovereignty, 2 Sam. 7. 22. Thou art great, O Lord God, for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, although he thus humble himself to behold things in Heaven and Earth; and these high and holy thoughts of him will and should be attended with debasing and humbling thoughts of self, although admitted to this high Dignity, 2 Sam. 7. 13. Then went king David in, and sat before the Lord, and he said, who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? It is no small thing to be allied unto, and with the great God of Heaven, and his

Son Christ, as David speaketh when king Saul did offer his daughter unto him, 1 Sam: 18. 22. Yea, further, there should be special, guarding and watching, that the heart keep spiritual in transacting with God, there is great reason for this holy way of performing the duty; for men are ready to misken themselves, and to shape the Lord according to their own fancy, and to turn carnal in the businels, since it is a marriage transaction held out in the ordinary expressions of love, as in the Song of Solomon, Isa 62. 5. Zeph, 3. 17.

The Fourth thing we shall speak a word unto is, what would follow upon this express verbal covenanting with God. I say, Beside that union and communion with God in Christ, following upon believing, if a man explicitly by word transact with God.

I. He should thenceforth be singularly careful to abide close by God in all manner of conversation, for, if a man thenceforth do any thing unsuitable, he doth falsifie his word before God, which will stick much in his conscience, and prove a snare, if a man thenceforth misken God, and take on him to dispose of himself, since he is not his own, and hath opened his mouth unto the Lord, he makes enquiry after vows, and devoureth that which is holy, Prov: 20. 25.

II. He who so transacteth with God, should hold stedfast that determination and conclusion, it is shame for a man, whose heart hath closed with God, and whose mouth hath ratified and confirmed it solemnly before him, to contradict himself again, and to admit any thing to the contrary, he ought boldly to maintain the thing against all deadly.

Then let me obtest you with desire to be established in the matter of your interest in God, that with all conveniency you set apart a piece of

Time for prayer before God and labouring to work up your heart to seriousness, affection, and the faith of the duty, to make a covenant, and to transact with God by express words, after this manner.

“O Lord, I am a lost and broken Creature by nature, and by innumerable actual transgressions, which I do confess particularly before thee this day, and although, being born within the visible Church, I was from the womb in covenant with thee, and had the same sealed unto me in Baptism; yet for a long time, I have lived without God in the world, senseless and ignorant of my obligation by virtue of that covenant, thou hast at length discovered unto me, and bound upon my heart, my miserable state in my self, and hast made manifest unto my heart the satisfying relief thou hast provided by Christ Jesus, offering the same freely unto me, upon Condition that I would accept of the same, and would close with thee as my God in Christ, warranting and commanding me, upon my utmost peril, to accept of his offer, and to flee unto Christ Jesus, yea to my Apprehension, now thou hast sovereignly determined my heart, and shaped it for Christ Jesus, leading it out after him in the offers of the gospel, causing me to approach unto the living God, to close so with him, and to acquiesce in his offer, without any known Guile, and that I may come up to that Establishment of spirit in this matter, which should be to my comfort, and the praise of thy glorious grace, therefore, I am here this day to put that matter out of question, by express words before thee, according to thy will, and now I, unworthy as I am, do declare, that I believe, that Christ Jesus, who was slain at Jerusalem, was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, I do believe

believe that record, that there is Life eternal for men in him, and in him only, I do this day in my heart please and acquiesce in that device of saving sinners by him; and do entrust my soul unto him, I do accept of Reconciliation with God through him; and do close with thee as my God in him, I choose him in all that he is, and all that may follow him, and do resign up my self, and what I am or have, unto thee, desiring to be divorced from every thing hateful unto thee, and that without Exception, or reservation of any thing consistent within my knowledge, or intended Reversion, Here I give the hand to thee, and do take all things about me Witnesses, that I, whatever I be or have hitherto been, do accept of God's offer of peace through Christ and do make a sure covenant with thee this day, never to be ranversed, hoping that thou wilt make all things forthcoming both on thy part and mine, seriously begging, as I desire to be saved, that my Corruption may be subdued, and my Neck brought under thy sweet Yoke in all things, and my heart made cheerfully to acquiesce in whatsoever thou dost unto me, or with me, in order to these Ends. Now, glory be unto thee, O Father, who devised such a salvation, and gave the Son to accomplish it: Glory be to Christ Jesus, who at so dear a Rate, did purchase the outletting of that Love from the Father's Bosom, and through whom alone this Access is granted, and in whom I am reconciled unto God, and honourably united unto him, and am no more an Enemy or stranger: Glory to the holy Ghost, who did alarm me when I was destroying my self, and who did not only convince me of my hazard, but did also open my eyes to behold the relief provided in Christ; yea, and did perswade and determine my wild

heart to fall in Love with Christ, as the end-
 riching Treasure, and this day doth teach me
 how to covenant with God, and how to improp-
 priate to my self the sure Mercies of David,
 and blessing of Abraham, and to secure to my
 self the Favour and Friendship of God for ever,
 Now with my soul, heart, head, and whole
 man, as I can, I do acquiesce in my choice this
 day, henceforth resolving not to be my own,
 but thine, and that the Care of whatsoever
 concerns me shall be on thee as my head and
 Lord, protesting humbly, that Failings on my
 part, (against which I resolve, thou knowest)
 shall not make void this covenant, for so hast
 thou said, which I intend not to abuse, but so
 much more to cleave close unto thee, and I
 must have liberty to renew ratifie, and draw
 Extracts of this Transaction, as often as shall
 be found needful, Now I know thy consent
 to this Bargain stands recorded in scripture, so
 as I need no new signification of it; and I
 having accepted of thy Offer upon thy own
 Terms, will henceforth wait for what is good,
 and for thy Salvation in End. As thou art
 faithful, pardon what is amiss in my way of do-
 ing the thing, and accept me in my sweet Lord
 Jesus, in whom I only desire pardon. And I in
 Testimony hereof, I set to my Seal, that God
 is true in declaring him a competent Savi-
 our.

Let people covenant with God in fewer or
 more words, as the Lord shall dispose them; for
 we intend no plat form for words for any Per-
 son, only it were fitting that men should, be-
 fore the Lord, acknowledge their lost State in
 themselves, and the Relief that is by Christ, and
 that they do declare that they accept of the same
 as it is offered in the Gospel, and do thankfully
 rest satisfied with it, entrusting themselves hence-
 forth

forth wholly unto God to be saved in his way for which they wait according to his Faithfulness.

If men would heartily and sincerely do this, it might, through the Lord's Blessing, help to establish them against many Fears and Jealousies and they might date some good thing from this day and Hour, which might prove comfortable unto them when they fall in the Dark afterwards, and even when many Failings do stare them in the Face, perhaps at the Hour of Death 2 Sam. 23. 5. These be the last words of David -- Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my Salvation, and all my desire. It is much it a man can Appeal unto God, and say, thou knowest there was a day and an Hour, when in such a place I did accept of peace through Christ, and did deliver up my heart to thee to write on it thy whole Law without Exception; Heaven and Earth are Witnesses of it, remember the word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope, Psal. 119 49

Obj. 2. I dare not adventure to speak such words unto God, because I find not my heart coming up full Length in Affection and Seriousness, so I shall but lie unto God, in transacting so with him.

Ans. It is to be regretted that man's heart doth not, with much Bensail of desire and Affection, embrace and welcome that blessed Offer and portion, yet for answer to the Objection, remember. 1. That in those to whom the Lord giveth the new heart, forming Christ in them, the whole heart is not renewed, there is Flesh and Spirit, lusting against other, the one contrary unto the other so as a man can neither do, the good or Evil he would do, with full Bensail, Gal. 5. 17. It is well

if there be a good part of the heart going out after Christ, desiring to close with him in his own Terms,

II. That there is often a rational Love in the heart unto Christ Jesus, expressing it self by a respect to his commandments, 1 John 5. 3. This is the Love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous when there is not a sensible prevailing Love which maketh the soul sick, Cant. 2. 5. I am sick of Love, men must not always expect to find this. I say then, although somewhat in your heart draw back, yet if you can say that you are convinced of your broken state without him, that you want a righteousness to cover your guilt, and that you want strength to stand out against sin, or to do what is pleasing before God, and that you also see fulness in him, in both these respects, if you dare say that somewhat within your heart, would be fain at him upon his own terms, and would have both righteousness for Justification and strength in order to Sanctification, and that what is within you contradicting this, is your burden in some Measure, and your Bondage; if it be so, your Heart is brought up a tolerable Length; go on to the Business and determine the Matter by covenanting with God, and say with your Mouth, That you have both Righteousness and Strength in the Lord, as he hath sworn you shall do, Isa. 45. 23, 24. It is approved Divinity to say unto God I believe, when much misbelief is in me, and the heart divided in the case. Mark 9. 24. Lord, I believe help thou mine unbelief, withal shew unto God how matters are in your heart, that so you may be without guilt before him, concealing nothing from him, and put your heart, as it is, in his hand, to write his law on it according to the covenant; for that is the thing he seeks of men, that they deliver up their heart to him, that he

he may stamp it with his whole will, without Exception, and if you can heartily consent unto that judging Christ's blood a sufficient ransom and satisfaction for man's transgression, you may go and expressly strike covenant with God, for your heart and affection is already engaged.

Object. I dare not so covenant with God, lest I break to him, yea, I perswade my self, that if such a temptation did offer, so and so, circumstantiated, I would fall before it, and succumb; therefore to transact so with God, whilst I foresee such a thing, were but to aggrege my condemnation.

Ans. I. You have already entred covenant with God, as you are a member of his visible church, and what is now prest upon you is, but that you more heartily, sincerely, particularly, and more expressly covenant and transact with him you are already obliged heartily to close with God in Christ, and if you do it in heart, I hope the Hazard is no greater by saying that you do so or have done so.

II. What will you do if you shift hearty transacting with God in Christ, and do not accept his peace as it is offered? You have not a second of it in the world; either you must do this or perish for ever, and if you do it with your heart, you may also say it with your Tongue.

III. If people may fear at covenanting with God, because they will afterwards transgress, then not one man should covenant with God, for surely every one will transgress afterwards if they live any Length of time after the transaction; and we know no way like this to secure men from falling, for if you covenant honestly with him, he engageth, beside the new heart to put his Fear and Law therein, to give his spirit to cause you walk in his way, and when you cove-

nant with God, you deliver up your self unto him to be sanctified and made conform to his will, it is rather a giving up of your self to be laid in his way in all things, and kept from every evil way, than any formal Engagement on your part, to keep his way, and to hold off from evil, so that you need not fear at the covenant, the Language whereof is wilt thou not be made clean? Jer. 13. 27. And all that shun to strike covenant with God, doth hereby declare, that they desire not to be made clean.

IV. As it is hard for any to say confidently, they will not transgress, if such a Temptation did offer, so and so circumstantiated, because men may think that either God will keep a Temptation out of their way, or not suffer them to be tempted above they are able to bear, or give to them away of Escape, Plal. 46. 1. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in Trouble 1 Cor. 10. 13. There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to men, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the Temptation also Make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. So the Question is not, what I may do afterwards? but, what I now resolve to do, if my heart charge me presently with my deceit or resolution to transgress, I must lay aside that deceit before I transact with God: But if my heart charge me with no such purpose, yea I dare say, I resolve against every Transgression, and although I think I will fall before such and such a Temptation, yea that thought floweth not from any allowed and approved resolution to do, but from knowledge of my own Corruption, and of what I have done to provoke God to desert me, but the Lord knows I resolve not to transgress, nor do I approve any secret inclination of my heart to such a sin, but would reckon it my singular mercy to be kept from sin

in such a Case, and I judge my self a wretched man, because of such a body of death within me which doth threaten to make me transgress, in that case, I say, my heart doth not condemn me, therefore I may and ought to have confidence before God, 1 John 3. 21. If this then be the case I say to thee, although thou should afterwards fall many ways, and so perhaps draw upon thy self sad temporal strokes thereby, and lose for a season many Expressions of his Love, yes there is an Advocate with the Father to plead thy pardon, 1 John 2. 1. Who hath satisfied for our Breaches, Isa. 53. 5, 6. He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed, all we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. And for his sake, God resolveth to hold fast the covenant with man after their Transgression, Psal. 89. 30-----37. If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my Commandments, nevertheless, my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail, my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my Lips. Once have I sworn by my Holiness --- Else how could he be said to betroth us unto himself for ever? Hosea 2 19, 20. And how could the covenant be called everlasting, ordered in all things and sure, if there were not ground of comfort in it, even when our house is not so and so with God? 2 Sam 23. 5.

Yea, it were no better than the covenant of Works, if these who enter it with God, could so depart from him again, as to make it void unto themselves, and to put themselves into a worse condition than they were in before they made it, Jer. 32. 40. And I will make an everlasting

lasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good compared with Heb. 8. 6. But now he hath obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much more also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, Mal. 2. 16. The Lord hateth putting away, no honest heart will stumble on this, but will rather be strengthened thereby in duty Hos. 14. 4. In the end, I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him---- Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them. For other Ties and bonds, beside the Fear of divorce, and punishment by death, do oblige the ingenious wife unto duty, so here men will fear the Lord and his goodness, Hosea. 3. 5.

Object. I have at the Celebration of the Lord's Supper, and at some other occasions, covenanted expressly and verbally with God, but my Fruitfulness in his way, and the renewed Jealousies of my gracious state, maketh me question if ever I transacted with God in sincerity, and I think I can do it no other ways than I have done it.

Ans. I. Men are not to expect Fruitfulness according to their desire, nor full assurance of God's favour immediately after they have fled unto Christ, and expressly transacted with God in him, these things will keep a man on work all his days, the saints had their failings and short comings, yea and backslidings, with many fits of dangerous misbelief, after they had very seriously, and sincerely, and expressly closed with God, as their God in Christ.

II. Many do look for Fruitfulness in their walk, and Establishment of faith, from their own sincerity in transacting with God, rather than from the

the spirit of the Lord Jesus, they best their heart in their own honesty and Resolutions, and not in the blessed Root Christ Jesus, without whom we can do nothing, and are Vanity altogether in our best Estate, men should remember that one piece of grace cannot produce any degree of grace further, nothing can work grace but the Arm of J E H O V A H; and if men would lean unto Christ, and covenant with him as their duty absolutely, whatsoever may be the consequence, at least looking only to him for the suitable fruit, it should fare better with them, God pleaseth not that men should betake themselves unto Christ, and covenant with him for a season, until they see if such fruit and Establishment shall follow, purposing to disclaim their Interest in him and the covenant, if such and such fruit doth not appear within such a length of time. This is to put the ways of God to Trial, and is very displeasing unto him, Men must absolutely cleave with Christ and covenant with him, resolving to maintain these things as their duty, and a ready way to reach fruit, whatsoever shall follow thereupon, they having a Testimony within them, that they seriously design conformity to his revealed will in all things; and that they have closed covenant with him for the same end, as well as to be saved thereby.

III. Men should be sparing to bring in question their sincerity in transacting with God, unless they can instruct the same, or have great presumption for it, if you can instruct any deceit or guile in your transacting with him, you are obliged to disclaim and rectifie it, and to transact with God honestly, and without guile; but if you know nothing of your deceit or guile, in the day you did transact with him, yea, if you can say, that you did appeal unto God in that day, that you dealt honestly with him, and intended

tended not to deceive, and did obtest him according to his Faithfulness, to search and try if there was any Crookedness in your way, and to discover it, unto you, and heal it, search me O God, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting Psal. 139. 23, 24. And that afterwards you come to the light that your deeds might be made manifest, John 3. 20, 21. And if you can say that God's answers from his word to you in so far as you could understand, were answers of peace and confirmation of your Sincerity. Yea, further if you dare say, that if upon Life and Death, you were again to transact with him, you can do it no other way, nor intend more sincerity and seriousness than before, then I dare say unto thee, in the Lord's name, thou ought not to Question thy sincerity in transacting with God, but to have confidence before God, since thy heart doth not condemn thee, 1 John 3. 21. And thou art bound to believe, that God dealeth uprightly with the upright man, and with the pure, doth shew himself pure, Psal. 18. 25, 26. If a man intend honesty, God will not suffer him to beguile himself, yea, the Lord suffereth no man to deceive himself, unless the man intend to deceive both God and man.

IV. Therefore impute your Unfruitfulness to your Unwatchfulness and your Misbelief, and impute your want of full Assurance, unto an evil heart of Unbelief, helped by Satan to act against the glorious free grace of God, and charge not these things upon want of sincerity in your closing with Christ. And resolve henceforth to abide close by the Root, and you shall bring forth more Fruit, and by much Fruit you lay your self open to the Witness of God's Spirit, which will testify with your Spirit, that you have sincerely and honestly closed with God, and that the
rest

rest of your works are wrought in God, and approved of him, and so the witness of the Spirit and the water joining with the blood, whereupon you are to lay the weight of your soul and conscience, and where alone you are to sink the curses of the Law due unto you for all your sins, and Failings in your best things there three do agree in one, viz. That this is the way of Life and peace, and that you have Interest therein, and so you come to quietness and full Assurance, John 15 4, 5. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear Fruit of it self, except it abide in the Vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me, I am the Vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much Fruit, for without me ye can do nothing, John 14. 21, 23. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and will manifest my self to him, if a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, Rom. 8. 16. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God. 1 John 5, 8. There are three that bear Witness in Earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one.

O blessed bargain of the new covenant, and thrice blessed Mediator of the same! Let him ride prosperously, and subdue Nations and Languages, and gather in all his Jewels, that honourable company of the first born, that stately Troop of Kings and Priests whose glory it shall be to have washed their Garments in the blood of that spotless Lamb, and whose Happiness shall continually flourish in following him whithersoever he goeth, and in being in the immediate

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mediate company of the Ancient of days, one
sight of whose Face shall make them in a manner
forget, that ever they were in the Earth. Oh!
if I could persuade men to believe that these
things are not yea, and nay, and to make haste
towards him, who hasteth to judge the World,
and to call men to an Account, especially anent
their improvement of this gospel, Even so, come
Lord Jesus.

F I N I S.



The whole Treatise resumed in a
few Questions and Answers.

Quest. 1:

VVhat is the great businels a man hath to do
in the World?

Ans. To make sure a saving Interest in Christ
Jesus, and to walk suitably thereunto.

Quest. 2. Have not all the members of the visible
Church a saving Interest in Christ?

Ans. No verily, yea, but a very few of them
have it.

Quest. 3. How shall I know if I have a saving
Interest in him?

Ans. Ordinarily the Lord prepareth his own way
in the Soul, by a work of Humiliation, and
discovereth a man's sin and misery to him, and
exerciseth him so therewith, that he longs for the
Physician Christ Jesus.

Quest. 4. How shall I know if I have got a compe-
tent discovery of my sin and misery?

Ans. A competent sight of it makes a man take
Salvation to heart above any thing in this
World; It maketh him disclaim all Relief in
himself, even in his best things; It maketh
Christ, who is the redeemer, very precious to
the Soul; It makes a man stand in awe to sin
afterwards, and makes him content to be saved
upon any terms God pleaseeth.

Quest. 5. What other way may I discern a saving
Interest in him?

Ans. By the going out of my heart seriously and
affectionately towards him, as he is held out in
the gospel, and this is faith or believing.

Quest:

Quest. 6. How shall I know if my heart goeth out after him aright, and that my Faith is true saving Faith?

Ans. Where the heart goeth out aright after him, in true and saving Faith, the Soul pleaseth Christ alone above all things, and pleaseth him in all his three Offices, to rule and instruct, as well as to save, and is content to cleave unto him, whatsoever inconveniences may follow.

Quest. 7. What other Mark of a saving Interest in Christ can you give to me?

Ans. He that is in Christ savingly, is a new Creature, he is graciously changed and renewed in some measure, in the whole man, and in all his ways, pointing towards all the known commands of God.

Quest. 8. What if I find sin now and then prevailing over me?

Ans. Although every sin deserveth everlasting Vengeance, yet if you be afflicted for your failings, confess them with shame of face unto God resolving to strive against them honestly henceforth, and flee unto Christ for Pardon, you shall obtain mercy, and your Interest stands sure.

Quest. 9. What shall the Man do who cannot lay Claim to Christ Jesus, nor any of these Marks spoken of?

Ans. Let him not take rest, until he make sure unto himself a saving Interest in Christ.

Quest. 10. What way can a man make sure an Interest in Christ, who never had a saving Interest in him hitherto?

Ans. He must take his sins to heart, and his great Hazard thereby, and he must take to heart God's offer of Pardon and peace through Christ Jesus, and heartily close with God's offer,
by

by betaking himself unto Christ the blessed Refuge.

Quest. 11. What if my sins be singularly hainous, and great beyond ordinary?

Ans. Whatsoever thy sins be, if thou wilt close what Christ Jesus by faith, thou shalt never enter into condemnation.

Quest. 12. Is Faith in Christ only required of men?

Ans. Faith is the only condition upon which God doth offer peace and pardon unto men, but be assured, Faith, if it be true and saving, will not be alone in the Soul, but will be attended with true Repentance, and a thankful Study of Conformity to G O D's Image.

Quest. 13. How shall I be sure that my heart doth accept of God's offer, and doth close with Christ Jesus.

Ans. Go make a covenant expressly and by word speak the thing unto God.

Quest. 14. What way shall I do that?

Ans. Set apart some Bit of time, and having considered your own lost Estate, and the Relief offered by Christ Jesus, work up your heart to please and close with that offer, and say unto God expressly that you do accept of that offer, and of him to be your God in Christ, and do give up your self to him, to be saved in his way, without reservation or exception in any Case, and that you henceforth will wait for Salvation in the way he hath appointed.

Quest. 15. What if I break unto G O D afterwards?

Ans. You must resolve on his strength not to break, and watch over your own way, and put your heart in his hand to keep it, and
if

if you break, you must confess it unto God, and judge your self for it, and flee to the Advocate for pardon, and resolve to do more so; and this you must do as often as you fail.

Quest. 16. How shall I come to full Assurance of my Interest in Christ, so as it may be above controversy?

Ans. Learn to lay your weight upon the blood of Christ, and study purity and Holiness in all manner of Conversation, and pray for the Witness of God's Spirit, to join with the blood and the water; and his Testimony added unto these, will establish you in the faith of an Interest in Christ.

Quest. 17. What is the Consequence of such closing with God in Christ by heart and mouth?

Ans. Union and Communion with God, all good here, and his blessed Fellowship in Heaven for ever afterwards.

Quest. 18. What if I slight all these things, and do not lay them to heart, to put them in practice?

Ans. The Lord cometh with his Angels in flaming Fire, to render vengeance to them who obey not his Gospel, and thy Judgment shall be greater than the Judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and so much the greater that thou hast read this Treatise, for it shall be a Witness against thee in that Day.

An Explication of some Scot words that are used
in this Treatise.

To aggrege, to aggravate or highten, Page
147. l. 12.

To airt, to direct, Page 26 l. 20. from Airth to
Point in the Heavens, Page 27. l. 24.

Anent of, or concerning.

Bensail, to do a thing with a Bensail, is to do it
with Force and Vigour, as it with a bent Sail,
P. 145. l. 31. 39.

Cast, to cast out with one, is to fall out with him
P. 35. l. 33. To cast up a thing to a man, is to
upbraid him with it, P. 25. l. 22. one is said
to give another a Cast of his hand, when he
gives him a voluntary and effectual Assistance,
P. 20. l. 39.

A Cautioner, a Surety, P. 19. l. 15.

To compete with one, is to become his rival, P. 51. l. 10.

To condescend upon, is to give a particular Instance
of P. 12. l. 12. and P. 33. l. 26.

Conform, Conformable, P. 85. l. 39. P. 86. l. 1.

To depone, to depose or swear to a thing as a Wit-
ness, P. 81. l. 4. and l. 18.

A ditty, is either an Accusation, or a Sentence of
Condemnation, P. 115. l. 21.

Expede, expedired or dispatched, P. 22. l. 12.

An Extract, an Exemplification, P. 144. l. 18.

Fainteth, maketh faint P. 100. l. 12.

Fleckless, weak as it were, effectless, P. 113. l. 17.

A Glance, a Glimple, P. 82. l. 21.

To haft, or heft, to fix, as a Knife is fixed in it's
Haft. P. 151. l. 1.

Hands, to be in hands with a thing is to be in
Possession of it, P. 122 l. 30. P. 127. l. 6.

To instruct a thing, is to prove it clearly, P. 61.
l. 32. P. 118. l. 4. P. 151. l. 31.

Law bidding, able to answer a Charge, or accusation
P. 44. l. 31.

To misken a thing is to let it alone, forbear it or
leave of meddling with it. oT

An Explanation of some Scots words.

To misken a person, is not to own that you know him, to take no notice of him, or to neglect him, P. 26. l. 27. P. 141. l. 7. and l. 24.

Pals gilt, Current Money, P. 99. l. 9.

To please a thing is to be pleased with it.

To put out, to exert, or put forth. P. 87. l. 14. P. 104 l. 6. P. 54. l. 37.

A Reel, a disorderly Motion, P. 64. l. 4. P. 107 l. 30

To shed with a person, is to part from him or to leave him, P. 125. l. 14.

To be sib, or have a sibnells to a man, is to be a kin to him, P. 24. l. 4.

To fit an offer, is not to accept of it in time, P. 21 l. 21.

To flait, to abuse in the worst manner, P. 69. l. 5.

To sway, or sway towards a thing, is to bend towards it, P. 47. l. 23.

To take up a thing, is to understand or apprehend it P. 37. l. 28, 29. P. 48. l. 3 P. 100. l. 20. P. 105 l 5

There away, that way, P. 121. l. 8.

Totryft or to make a tryft, is to appoint a meeting in the country, a tryft is a meeting to finish a bargain or to compose adifference bewext neighbours and the tryfting place is the place of meeting, P. 130 l 5

To win thither, to get hither, P. 44. l. 33, 34. won at, attained to P. 39. l. 8.

Waff, here signifies a Flash, P. 82 l. 2.

There are some expressions which are now become alittle low, that were not so when this book was written, there are likewise some phrases which are not English, but being expressed in English words they will be easily understood by the English reader, not one word in the Edition published by the Author is changed in this, except that shewed is printed instead of shew, which was the old preterite Tense, according to the custom of forming the preterite Tense in ew of the Verbs which end in aw, or ow, as draw drew, grow grew, After the same manner the Scots Verb show or shaw made in the preterite Tense shew, which is still continued in some Law Forms.

T H



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